

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting for Northleach with Eastington Parish

Wednesday 23rd May 2018

Present: Cllr Colton (Chair), Cllr Rayner (Vice Chair), Cllr Hewer, Cllr Morley Blackwell, Cllr Alan Wellman, Cllr Andrew Wellman, Cllr Hulcup, Cllr Hadley, Cllr Brady (arrived at 8pm), Clerk Mrs Cat Crompton and 11 members of the public

1. Resolution Action	<p>Cllr Hewer proposed, Cllr Alan Wellman seconded and it was unanimously RESOLVED To approve the Minutes of the last Annual Town Meeting held on 19th April 2017 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting and these were duly signed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk to chase up the road signs that were reported last year and have not been fixed
2. 2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 2.5	<p>Cllr Laurie Colton, Chairman and Mayor gave an annual report on behalf of Northleach with Eastington Town Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Council has lots of responsibilities including the KGV Playing Field Trust which is charity and all the Council members are Trustees • Last year we had 10 council meetings and 2 extraordinary meetings both regards planning matters at Old Coalyard Farm Industrial estate and Bassett Road development. We are consultees only on planning matters though the new Design Statement for the Town has helped • Traffic and dog fouling are common themes. We have done a lot in the past regards the dog issue and now implemented a Speed Watch programme led by one of our residents who is a former policeman. Although we can help pay for speed reduction measures, we cannot install anything ourselves as assessments are required in order for Highways to agree • There are several committees - Finance Committee, Property and Premises, KGV and Westwoods along with various working groups • On the Youth side £1,400 has been received from Cotswold District Council for some exciting projects for young people
3. 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4	<p>Cotswold District Councillor Chris Hancock was unavailable and sent a report and update on the Neighbourhood Development Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will I hope have been pleased to hear that CDC has not increased Council tax this year, unlike the majority of authorities. This follows a number of years of freezes and previous cuts in tax of 3% and 5%. This now puts CDC in the lowest charging group of district councils – almost in the top 10%. Additionally, on a basket of 10 measures, CDC has slowly been moving up the list of top scoring councils and this year became the most efficient of all of the 201 shire district councils against which it is measured. This is due not only to the quality of CDC officers, but also to the success of the establishment of its joint working strategy, sharing resource with West Oxfordshire, Forest of Dean and Cheltenham and the launch of our shared services company, Publica, wholly owned and controlled by the partner councils, but which now provides services to each of the partners. • Amongst the indicators on which CDC scores highly is recycling. Nevertheless, I am aware that we can take more care to ensure that we recycle what we can. Not only does this help conserve natural resources, but it also avoids the need for landfill, which is expensive and adds to all our taxes. Please check the CDC website for details of what can be recycled; don't forget it includes things like toothpaste tubes and aerosols....and congratulations too, to you all on another successful litter-pick. • Plans for improved parking in Cirencester continue and work is on-going to bring forward the decking of the Waterloo car park. That can only be done with the benefit of an adequate decant site to take vehicles displaced whilst it is out of action. I am pleased to say that we have now reached agreement with Cirencester Rugby club to provide space for about 150 vehicles which should also provide an on-going resource for business permit -based parking after the Waterloo car park is complete. • Whilst on the subject of cars, I would mention that CDC have set aside £300,000 to provide electric vehicle charging points in the district and we are presently examining the procurement options for this. This will add to the points already available in Cirencester and Moreton.

<p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The future of the county is something that should concern us all. District councils and the County council are all giving this thought and need your involvement to help provide a realistic and successful vision for the county to 2050. Please go the glos2050.com website to see how you can contribute and where you can find events that will inform you – for example at the Cotswold Show. Engage in the consultation and complete the survey. Amongst our challenges are an expected 66% increase in the 65+ population by 2050. How do we attract the young, what businesses will there be to contribute to our economy so we can deliver the services we need and who will service the needs of the ageing population with an expected increase in the working age population of only 1.4%? • Last year we embarked upon a consultation on initial drafts of the neighbourhood plan, both locally and with CDC. Following a number of meetings over the ensuing months, the formal Pre-submission plan was put out for consultation earlier this year and has had feedback from statutory authorities and residents as a result of which the proposed policies are being further refined prior to the plan being submitted to the Inspector later this year. If the Inspector is content, it will then go to a referendum in the parish. In essence, the plan provides the potential for future school expansion, car parking, market place improvements, protection of our heritage, designation of green space and the launch of an aspirational “green ring” around the town. • The next set of draft documents is presently being worked on and should soon be in a state to be put before the Steering Group for discussion and finalisation and then to the Town Council in order to approve the plan for submission to the Inspector. I would expect a referendum to be held in the Autumn.
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p>	<p>Report from Gloucestershire County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County Council’s budget of £420m was set earlier this year and the vast majority goes to adult social care and children in care. This is firstly due to an ageing population and secondly because more children are entering care as there is increased awareness of issues and people reporting them. In addition, the County Council provide other services such as education, transport, roads, infrastructure and libraries • Potholes are a major issue across the area. The current contract with Amey ends in March 2019 and will not be renewed. Tenders are being reviewed with several other suppliers. On a positive front some of the main roads round here are due to be resurfaced very soon including sections of the Fosseyway and A40. • I receive a pot of money each year for road issues and previously this has been used in Northleach on the town gates at East End and the traffic order at West End to improve passing and parking. This year it might help fund the proposed pedestrian crossing at Doctor’s Lane. • Speeding and traffic issues come up a lot. Sometimes the perception is that traffic is going faster than it is and this was shown by the data gathered from the speed strips. However, there is still issues with some drivers and we will be running one of the strip tests again to ensure we have accurate information to discuss solutions with Highways. • Following a site visit the latest on the Old A40 is that the ground is certainly slipping with major cracks in the wall and ground. We have been told we will get the report in June and proposals of what can be done. One option is to build a single lane above the slip rather than the 2 lanes • On faster broadband, many have access but some are still not connected and the County Council has committed to getting these gaps fixed in the next 3 years
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p>	<p>Annual report from The Westwood’s Centre Committee by Cllr Alan Wellman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last year was the best year financially since it was opened in 2000. It made a small profit which not many halls do. • I must thank Brian for all his hard work, in fact he sells the place. Nothing is too much for him. • Bookings are very good and we are having a pantomime again this year. The hall averages 80 bookings a month. • We have just had the exterior doors and windows and the garden gate painted as some renovation work was needed which has made it look very smart.
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>Annual report from Finance, Funding and Grants Committee by Cllr Pauline Rigby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The precept is the money collected from taxpayers through the council tax bill to fund 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.

<p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p> <p>6.7</p> <p>6.8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Council always try to limit any increase to the precept, but costs are rising. Following zero increase to residents in 2017-18, we requested an amount that would appear on bills as about 9% for 2018-19. There were two main reasons for the increase: staff salaries have gone up by about £5000 annually, and we have allocated more money to projects that will improve play provision for children and young people in the town. • The work of local councils is increasing in complexity and requires more resources, both in terms of staff skills and time. We set up a Staffing Subcommittee to make sure that our staff receive salary and performance reviews on an annual basis. The Subcommittee reviewed the roles and benchmarked the salaries using nationally accepted tools and found that the Clerk was on a salary point below what she might expect to receive in a similar position elsewhere. So, an increase was overdue. We have reviewed the other staff positions, but there is still much work to be done. • This committee also considers applications to the Town Council’s community grant scheme. Over the past year, we have supported the Historical Society to produce their walking trail leaflets and Citizens Advice (Stroud and Cotswold District). We budget £1000 annually for local causes and community groups and would like to encourage more groups to apply. Details are available on the town website, or from the Clerk. • I’d also like to say a few words about the play area project, and apologies that I’m not here to report on it in person. We have made important progress on this project in the past six months and are incredibly close to finalising the design and placing an order with our preferred supplier, Playdale. In fact, councillors have various meetings tomorrow to work out those finer details. • Of course, a project like this needs money, and lots of it. Over the past few years, the Town Council has set aside funds from filming activities in the town, as well as donations received from the Northleach and Fosse Lions and the Steam Show. Last October, the town received section 106 money from the Bassett Road development, of which about £35,000 was intended for the play park. Earlier this year, the Town Council made a successful application to Cotswold District Council’s Community Projects Fund, which netted us another £10,000. • Then in March, the Northleach Town Trustees agreed to contribute the sum of £11,000 towards the refurbishment of the children’s playground. The Council would like to thank them for their generous contribution, which has helped take the project over the finish line financially. • This project has definitely been a marathon rather than a sprint, and I will be so excited to see the new playground equipment finally being delivered.
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p> <p>7.4</p> <p>7.5</p> <p>7.6</p> <p>7.7</p>	<p>Annual report from the Property & Premises Maintenance Committee by Cllr Vicki Hewer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I’m privileged to be Chair of this Committee and would like to thank our hard- working Councillors, seconded members of the public and Catriona Crompton and Mary Cassidy who do all the extensive background work and paperwork involved in this busy Committee. This is a high-profile Committee which is noticeable when it gets things right and even more so when it doesn’t which is thankfully not often! • Our most costly job is the maintenance of the grass throughout the Town which includes the Church Yard, Cemetery and Sports Field. McCrackens undercut in their quote our previous contractors by a large amount and their first year inevitably turned up a few shortcomings which we hope that during their second year of a renewed contract will be resolved. • For the first Winter in a while snow clearance was necessary and fortunately our budget has not been exceeded despite numerous falls. As a consequence of the heavy snowfalls tree work this year has been more extensive than usual and of course this is always expensive. • Though the play areas are annually inspected and maintained by this committee, there is another group which will be reporting exciting news on that front. • Allotments are fully occupied with a few changes this year though fees remain unchanged. The list of those waiting for allotments is very short and one or two of those are not yet ready to take one on. Mrs Smyth, who died last year, has donated a shed for the use of allotment users and her relatives have given a wooden seat again for use by allotment holders. • Over the Winter the bus shelter canopy was broken, it is supposed by a passing lorry, and as yet this has not been replaced. CDC have declined to help with this and as it is not within this year’s budget it may have to wait a while, particularly since it was not received well in the first place and new designs will have to be considered.

7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortly herbs will be planted round the War Memorial on the Market Place which will be free for any resident to pick for their own use (please only pick what you need personally). There have also been additional plants put in the main flower bed on the Market Place which is beginning to mature up a little. Hopefully these will give a little more colour to the bed as a whole.
7.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hoped-for path through from the Surgery to the Water Meadow will not now be formalised for reasons beyond our control but as most of you will know there is a well-trodden way through already!
7.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final touches are being put to the two developments at each end of the Town. It has been a long haul to get these two sites developed satisfactorily and now we can expect to see less vans and lorries parked on the roads even though when all the houses are sold we must expect more traffic especially at rush hours.
7.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last year's Litter Pick was a great success with about 87 people turning up. Within a few hours 45 black bags were filled from all corners of Northleach. CDC awarded us first prize which was £500 to be spent on the environment and a seat and bins will be purchased for the new Play Area.
7.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rules and regulations for the Cemetery were reviewed but few changes were made and no fee increases ensued.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lastly riparian responsibilities have always been an issue and work will be undertaken to try to discover the exact boundaries of properties bordering the River Leach so the Council and resident's responsibilities can be accurately defined.
8.	<p>Annual report from the King George V Trust by Cllr Alan Wellman</p>
8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not much to say about the field except that it is very well used. The school use it, as do the many Junior football teams that we have in Northleach currently.
8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the winter we installed a multi-use games wall at the far end replacing the old cricket nets. This weekend we hosted the Northleach 10k and 3k run on the field which was well attended. We look forward to welcoming the Charter Fair at the end of June which is under new management.
8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the pavilion we hope to repair the ceiling and the roof this year. These both desperately need doing.
9.	<p>Annual Police report for the Parish</p>
9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual report shows the police incidents recorded from April 2016 – March 2017 against the same period in 2017 – 2018.
9.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017 -2018 figures show a total of 50 incidents this year compared to 45 the previous year and the police consider this to be a marginal increase.
9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The figures show a slight drop in road and traffic related incidents but an increase in crime generally. The Police noted that the increase in 2017 – 2018 mainly relates to a single incident on one night when 5 cars were broken into.
9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not possible to directly compare burglary figures as in April 2017 the way that they are categorised was changed. However, burglaries in dwellings and non-dwellings both increased.
9.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to forward out police advice as we receive it.
10.	<p>Annual report from the Town Council office by Mrs Cat Crompton, Town Clerk and RFO</p>
10.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for attending tonight to hear about the work of the Council. As you can see our responsibilities are wide ranging. The Council staff consist of 3 part time employees, myself, our Administration Assistant Mary who is with us tonight and Brian who runs the Westwoods Centre.
10.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Council operate on a very local level. Our responsibility covers the parish of Northleach so the town itself, the hamlet of Eastington and some outlying homes. We work 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.
10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary and I have been in the roles for 5 and 6 years respectively and can guarantee to learn something new every week. Last year our steep learning curve was the Pension Auto Enrolment and this year it has been the General Data Protection Regulations. This is about ensuring people's personal data is protected and the law comes into effect on Friday. We have been doing lots of work to prepare ourselves for this including asking people to opt into our existing Community email list. If you have already subscribed to the new mailing list thank you and if you haven't I'm afraid we won't be able to contact you after Friday!
10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every town council is different depending on their responsibilities and in Northleach we are lucky to have a lot of facilities for the community like the Playing Fields, Westwoods Centre, play areas,

<p>10.5</p> <p>10.6</p> <p>10.7</p> <p>10.8</p> <p>10.9</p> <p>10.10</p>	<p>allotments and the Cemetery. In addition, 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 it's not our responsibility we should be able to point you in the right direction!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside the statutory work we undertake we deal with a range of issues each week. These can come from residents directly, Town Councillors or the District or County Councillors. Depending on the nature of these we can either deal with them straight away for example reporting broken streetlights or responding to an allotment query or I feed these into the relevant meetings. • Last year we had 10 council and 20 committee meetings where a number of decisions affecting the environment and facilities of Northleach were discussed. In addition, there were a number of additional meetings for Planning, the Neighbourhood Development Plan, suppliers and working groups such as the Staffing and Litter Pick Group. At this point I would like to thank the Fosse Lions and the Pavilion for their help with the organisation and the refreshments. 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 as the Responsible Financial Officer. These include all the financial transactions and recording of these plus budget planning. Last year I processed over 320 payments but on a positive note also recorded over 330 receipts of money coming into the Town Council. This number of transactions is very similar to last years. The Internal and External audits are imminent and these involve a lot of statutory paperwork. In addition, there are often grant applications to complete, general good housekeeping like utility comparisons and Vat returns to process. I am delighted to report that we have just received two youth grants from Cotswold District Council which will enable us to provide interesting activities for young people. • Our communication to the community is via the town website, Facebook pages, parish magazine, Standard newspaper and the community email list as mentioned above. • Thank you for your time tonight and interest in the Town Council's work.
<p>11.</p> <p>11.1</p> <p>11.2</p> <p>11.3</p> <p>11.4</p>	<p>Playing Field facilities update by Cllr Andrew Wellman and Cllr Brian Hulcup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of suggestions for additional facilities were made to the Town Council by the Youth Forum and we have managed to implement some of these. • The moveable goal posts are really well used by children and families and have reduced the number of balls being knocked into the allotments and causing damage • The multi-use goal wall is also in place and contains a goal, rebound surfaces and basketball hoop. It is possible to play cricket, hockey and other games against it and the surfaces are being worked on. It has also meant that this particular area of the field is now in use again as the old cricket nets have been taken down and the contractors can mow the area again • We have been working on funding a zip wire which is like a cable way to run down the slope from the goal wall behind the tennis courts to the Play Area. Many thanks to the Youth Club Trustees who have donated £5000 to the fund and the Town Council will be looking for other sources too.
<p>13.</p> <p>13.1</p> <p>13.2</p>	<p>Public Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has there been any progress on the MUGA? Cllr Colton explained that there isn't a working group for this at the moment as there was no funding and the Council did not agree on this as a priority. Two previous MUGA groups have issued detailed reports which are on the website • Are there any plans for the Water Meadow? One of the residents has been working with the PPMC committee and looking at producing a management plan for the Water Meadow.