

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting Of Northleach with Eastington held online using Zoom on 21 April 2021, 7pm

Present: Cllr Rob Platts, Chairman of the Town Council, and 15 members of the public including district and county councillors, Town Clerk, and speakers.

1. Welcome

Rob Platts, Chairman of the Town Council, welcomed the public to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. The evening will feature several presentations on green issues and local groups speaking about what they are doing in this regard.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 24 April 2019, copies of which were available at the meeting, were approved as a correct record. As this was an online meeting the minutes will be signed by the Chairman as soon as practicable.

3. Carbon Neutral Northleach

Peter Mills gave a presentation about the Carbon Neutral Northleach initiative. The group was set up in 2019 following a public meeting which identified an opportunity to work together to reduce our carbon footprint as a parish. They have created a 10-year plan to 2030 about how we are going to reduce our carbon footprint. They are hoping to engage people to take part and will give guidance and assistance on how to reduce their carbon footprint. Their plans include tree planting, energy saving tips, buying local, sustainable transport, and reducing household fossil fuel consumption.

4. Northleach Town Trustees / Friends of the Cotswolds / Sly Trust

Speaking on behalf of the Town Trustees, Chris Hancock said he had spent the day up at the Trustee's field on the Old A40 sowing wildflower seed. They have planted about acre and a half of flower meadow while the rest of the field will be planted with meadow grass. One of the aims is to provide public access the field and put in benches so people can enjoy sitting there. Also being discussed is the possibility of tree planting along the top of the field.

Chris Hancock gave an update as deputy chair of the Friends of the Cotswolds, which owns the Old Prison. They had a difficult year as no sooner as they had established Relish as a tenant than everything closed because of the pandemic although the recovery is underway. They have secured a £40,000 grant from the Culture Recovery Fund which is enabling them to access expertise that will help deliver the business plan for the attraction. They are looking to develop the interpretation side of things and improve the presentation of the museum collection. The Old Prison also houses the radio station which is a great resource.

On behalf of the Sly Trust, Chris Hancock explained that the trust now has 11 properties in its portfolio, in addition to the 8 almshouses in its town. The 6 original properties are built to the highest possible sustainable standards with air source heat pumps and underfloor heating. They are close to delivering two new one-bed units in the Sly Barn which was undeveloped on the same site. Then they have Hilmarton on Mill End which is a bungalow with planning permission to provide two bedrooms upstairs. It is not legally lettable as its energy efficiency is too low. They will right this and make the properties as good as they can.

5. Cotswold Fosseway Lions Club

Avril Haesler, chairman elect of the Lions Club, spoke about the recycling projects they are supporting. There are three areas they help with: recycling of spectacles, litter picks and single use plastics. They are about to deliver over 1000 pairs of glasses to Lions HQ, which will be sorted, cleaned, and delivered to countries in need. One pair was from WWII and is now in a museum. They are also supporting the project WASUP - World Against Single Use Plastic - and trying to raise awareness of the yellow bins in the town for collecting plastics.

6. Men in Sheds (and She Shed)

Richard Harmer, leader of the Northleach shed, spoke about setting up the new shed at the Westwoods Centre, which is being relaunched after covid. They have been meeting again for the past couple of weeks, outside in line with guidance. Aligned with the ethos of Cotswold Friends their main aim is to provide a community facility to support members. They have a workshop cabin where they repair and renovate things that would otherwise have been destined for the scrapheap and are looking to fund their activities by selling what they make.

7. Cotswold Friends

Will Howard, a final year environmental management student at the University of Plymouth, has been working with Cotswold Friends to examine the carbon footprint of their services so they can consider the most effective ways to reduce carbon emissions. One of the highest areas of CO₂ production is their transportation service. They are using a zero-waste to landfill for office waste, an eco-search engine which uses revenues from searches to plant trees and gradually converting their office light bulbs to LED.

8. Cotswold District Council

District Councillor Tony Dale gave a summary of environmental initiatives at Cotswold District Council. They are working with council's waste collection company Ubico to prioritise low emission vehicles when they are replaced. They have a new electric vehicle charging policy which will create more charging points. The Council has responsibility for housing strategy and new affordable homes will be highly insulated, low carbon homes and include air source heat pumps. They would like to encourage all residents and local businesses to take similar steps to improve energy efficiency and hope to encourage young people to pursue 'green' careers. Their ambition is to be the most sustainable district in the country.

9. Windrush Against Sewage Pollution

Ashley Smith of WASP gave a presentation about sewage pollution, why it happens and why it is getting worse. WASP are a volunteer group trying to stop untreated sewage pollution getting into rivers and improve the quality of effluent that does go into rivers. They are campaigning on the quality of water in the River Windrush. He presented information about discharges from the sewage treatment plant in Northleach.

10. Public Question Time

There was an opportunity to ask questions, which were mainly on the topic of sewage.

11. Close of meeting

The Chairman thanked everyone for contributing and closed the meeting at 9:20 pm.

Signature of Chairman on approval of the minutes: _____