

# Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Northleach with Eastington Town Council held in the Westwoods Centre on 13 September 2023, 7pm

**Present:** Cllrs Terry Morley-Blackwell (Chairman), Brian Hulcup, Matt Jackson, Laura Kirkby, Patsi Rainey, Jules Russell, Caroline Saunders, Mark Tennant, Andrew Wellman, and Guy Woolley.

**In Attendance:** Pauline Rigby (Town Clerk), County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson, and 4 members of the public

## **72. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received from Cllr Byron Hadley.

## **73. Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

## **74. County and District Council reports**

County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson reported that:

- Speed surveys showed low traffic speeds within the town itself, which means Highways and the Police are likely to support such a change as it would be self-enforcing.
- The A435 at Seven Springs has reopened, and the A417 'Missing Link' construction has started although there is limited impact on traffic yet.
- Earlier this year he requested that Northleach be included in the 'Robin' on-demand bus service and followed up with a public question at the recent county council meeting.
- The NHS has started inviting eligible people for covid and flu jabs.

District Councillor Tony Dale was not in attendance.

## **75. Public Participation**

A resident of Webbs Court support in support of the request to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph on West End and the A429 Fosse Way near the traffic lights. Noise levels from faster traffic has risen to the point where she cannot sleep. She pointed out that the 40mph limit outside Webbs Court is inconsistent with the 30mph limit on the other side of the traffic lights and it creates safety concerns for pedestrians waiting to use the crossing.

A second resident of Webbs Court also spoke in support of the motion for 30mph.

A resident made several observations on the Parking Strategy report. Three car parking areas are not mentioned in the report: at The Old Prison, behind the Fire Station and the Westwoods / Medical Centre. The interaction with footpaths and bridleways could be considered as there is scope for expanding tourism if people park in the right places. Finally, there is no discussion of the implications of introducing parking charges.

## **76. Confirmation of Minutes**

The Clerk pointed out that final line of the payments list was a duplicate entry and should be deleted and the payment total updated.

It was RESOLVED that, subject to this amendment, the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on 12 July 2023 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

**77. Action Point Update**

A written update had been circulated and this was taken as read.

**78. Committee Minutes**

To receive the minutes of the committee meetings:

Property & Premises Committee on 8 August; and

Westwoods Committee meetings on 7 August and 6 September.

These would be available on the council's website.

**79. Highways Matters**

79.1 The Clerk gave a verbal update on the quarterly meeting with the Local Highways Manager.

79.2 To receive results from the speed surveys across town and consider the implementation of a 20mph speed limit, with likely cost in the region of £15,000.

Speed surveys reports had been circulated, which showed traffic driving close to 20mph. Members questioned the potential cost of the scheme. Cllr Hodgkinson explained it would be for Traffic Regulation Orders, lining and signs. He has two other parishes in his Ward also looking for speed limit changes, Hazelton and Cobberley, and combing the legal work would reduce costs. Funding may be available from the Highways 'Community Match' scheme or Councillor Grants if they are available next year. Members asked whether, given traffic is on average already driving close to 20mph, would a new speed limit be a good use of taxpayers money? Points for the change were that a lower speed limit would reduce speeds and make local roads safer, and that many residents had requested a 20mph limit.

It was proposed that Highways be asked to clarify exactly what they would implement and the cost to the Town Council. However, it was explained that it was not possible to get that information without moving to the next stage of the process.

It was RESOLVED that the speed limit reduction be progressed on the clear understanding that council had not made a financial commitment at this stage.

79.3 To consider a resident request for a 30mph speed limit at the traffic lights.

It was RESOLVED that request be passed to County Highways.

**80. Parking Strategy Steering Group**

80.1 To approve the minutes of the Steering Group meeting on 30 August 2023.

The Clerk clarified that as the Steering Group is being dissolved, the final minutes are approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman presiding.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes from the Parking Strategy Steering Group meeting on 30 August 2023 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

80.2 To consider the recommendation from the Parking Strategy Steering Group to adopt the report 'Northleach Parking Strategy: Issues and Options'.

The report had been circulated. Steering Group Chairman Chris Hancock was invited to present it. He noted that, under policies adopted in the Northleach Neighbourhood Plan, a new car park could only be developed as part of an overall parking strategy for the town.

It was RESOLVED that the Northleach Parking Strategy report be adopted.

It was observed that Northleach is the only town in the Cotswolds without a public car park.

## **81. Parking Strategy**

To discuss the next steps to progress the parking strategy, with a proposal to work with GCC's Highway Improvements Team to develop a brief for the design services contractor to do a feasibility study (site assessment, scheme design).

It was proposed that a budget be set aside to move the project forward, using the expertise of parking group, especially Chris Hancock, but under the oversight of the council.

It was RESOLVED that £7,000 be set aside for feasibility study, and Cllrs Jackson, Hulcup, and Russell be appointed as Council representatives to meet with Highways and report back.

## **82. Planning Matters**

82.1 To report comments on planning applications made under delegated authority.

Application Ref: 23/02195/FUL

Address: 9 Short Hedges Close Northleach Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 3PD

Proposal: Erection of two storey side and rear extension.

Comment: No objection

82.2 To consider applications received since publication of the agenda, if any.

None received.

## **83. Social Media Policy**

A draft policy had been circulated. A member commented that it was not a policy, it was more of a guidance document.

It was RESOLVED that the document be renamed as 'Social Media Guidance' and adopted.

## **84. Northleach History Exhibition**

To approve the display of items from HMS Starwort collection in the council archives at the Northleach History Exhibition at the Old Prison in November.

It was RESOLVED that the display of HMS Starwort collection be approved.

Cllr Hadley had requested support with the exhibition. Cllrs Jackson, Morley-Blackwell, Russell, Saunders, and Wellman volunteered.

## **85. Staff Structure Review**

To receive the Staff Structure Assessment and consider recommendations.

Cllr Jackson had agreed to carry out the staffing review and his report had been circulated.

85.1 *Recommendation A:* To establish two new roles of Westwoods Caretaker and Assistant Clerk.

It was RESOLVED that the two new roles be created as per the report.

Note: Decisions on recruitment were made at this point in the meeting, but are recorded at Minute 86 for ease of reference.

85.2 *Recommendation B:* Establish a volunteer group to support council activities.

Councillors were already undertaking tasks on a voluntary basis e.g. playground inspections. Volunteers could do more to help with operation of the Westwoods Centre, such as putting up the marquee liner and helping with serving teas and coffee. Cllr Jackson suggested an established role for volunteering within the council, which he would be happy to coordinate.

85.3 *Recommendation C:* Investigate door entry systems at the Westwoods Centre.

This recommendation would be progressed by the Westwoods Committee.

**86. Recruitment:** Subject to the above, to:

86.1 To note that recruitment for the caretaker role has commenced, following approval of the revised job description by the Westwoods Committee.

This was duly noted.

86.2 To approve the job description and launch recruitment for an Assistant Clerk.

Members discussed whether the position of Assistant Clerk would be more attractive to potential candidates at 15 or 16 hours per week and decided to offer the choice.

It was RESOLVED that authority be delegated to the Clerk to finalise the job descriptions and advertising, and the jobs would be advertised as soon as practicable.

86.3 To appoint 3 councillors to form an interview panel with the Clerk and make a recommendation on the preferred candidate.

It was RESOLVED that an interview panel would be Cllrs Jackson, Morley-Blackwell, and Rainey, with Cllr Kirkby as a substitute.

**87. 801 Bus service**

*Notice of motion from Cllr Hulcup:*

To approach Pulham's to request that Northleach is reinstated in the 801 schedule.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Hulcup be authorised to contact Pulhams about the 801 schedule.

**88. Disability Access**

*Notice of motion from Cllr Kirkby:* This Council resolves to:

88.1 Establish a Northleach Disability Access Forum as a working group of the Town Council.

Cllr Kirkby explained that it would be a group of people with an interest and understanding of the issues faced by people with disabilities which would give greater visibility to those issues, and there is no expectation council will approve what the group wants to do.

It was RESOLVED that a Northleach Disability Access Forum be established.

88.2 Consider the purchase of wireless doorbells at a cost of up to £10 per unit to be offered to businesses in the Market Place to aid service to disabled users.

Cllr Kirkby requested permission to approach businesses in person about providing doorbells and signs stating "if you are disabled and need help press this bell". The chemist has one which works well.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Kirkby's proposal be supported and approve purchase of wireless doorbells with a budget of £100.

88.3 Adopt a Disability Access Policy to highlight the Council's commitment to inclusion.

A draft policy had been circulated which promoted the social model of disability i.e that people are disabled by the barriers they face in society. A concern raised was the potential cost implications of adopting such a policy. Cllr Kirkby explained that it was important that inclusion is embedded in the council's decision making.

It was RESOLVED that that the Disability Access Policy be adopted.

**89. Finance**

89.1 To note the bank reconciliation of 31 August 2023.

This was duly noted.

89.2 To authorise the payment of accounts.

It was RESOLVED that payments be authorised in the sum of £15,744.51 as per the schedule appended.

**90. Councillor Training**

To consider holding an in-house training course at a cost of £350.

It was RESOLVED that the council meeting be moved to Wednesday 15 November, so that an in-house training course could take place on Wednesday 8 November at a cost of £350, and to release funds from general reserves to meet any shortfall in budgetary provision.

**91. Correspondence**

91.1 To consider GAPTC's request for nominations to its Executive Board.

There were no nominations.

91.2 Reminder of Cotswold District Town and Parish Forum in Moreton on 28 Sept.

This was noted.

**92. Future Agenda Items**

Already noted: Glorious Cotswold Grasslands, Market Place toilet block, Fortey Woods, events committee, pavilion roof, electoral representation from Eastington.

To be added: 30mph speed limit by the traffic lights.

**93. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is on Wednesday 11 October 2023, 7pm in the Westwoods Centre

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:10pm.

Signature of the Chairman on approval of the minutes: \_\_\_\_\_

## Payment schedule (minute 68)

Authority to pay is General power of Competence unless otherwise stated.

Date	Supplier	Service	Amount
14-Jul	EDF Energy	Westwoods electricity	£ 287.97
18-Jul	Northleach Post Office	Postage	£ 2.25
19-Jul	Spot On Supplies	Washroom supplies	£ 61.85
21-Jul	Screwfix	Gate spring	£ 3.39
21-Jul	Zen Internet	Broadband	£ 32.40
22-Jul	BrightHR	HR services	£ 24.30
22-Jul	Microsoft	MS365 Business Basic	£ 58.80
24-Jul	Pauline Rigby	SLCC Membership	£ 291.00
25-Jul	Staff costs	July payroll	£ 4,237.70
25-Jul	Amanda King	Westwoods cleaning	£ 128.00
25-Jul	Garry Evans	Window cleaning	£ 25.00
27-Jul	Playquest	Zip wire inspection	£ 720.00
26-Jul	Glasdon	Steel bin insert	£ 78.14
27-Jul	Stephen Chilton	Handyman	£ 18.00
31-Jul	Mainstream Digital	Telephone line	£ 49.88
31-Jul	Grundon	Waste collection	£ 99.95
31-Jul	Carole Cooper	Plants for Market Place	£ 76.94
01-Aug	McCracken and Sons	Grounds maintenance	£ 1,527.30
02-Aug	Northleach Post Office	Postage	£ 4.40
03-Aug	GeoXphere	Parish Online subscription	£ 120.00
08-Aug	Nisbets	Waste sacks	£ 42.69
14-Aug	PPE Store	Safety signs	£ 37.26
14-Aug	Spot On Supplies	Cleaning supplies	£ 77.99
15-Aug	EDF Energy	Westwoods electricity	£ 400.87
14-Aug	Spot On Supplies	Credit note	-£ 28.99
16-Aug	DM Payroll	Payroll services	£ 78.00
16-Aug	Northleach Post Office	Postage	£ 2.25
21-Aug	Cotswold District Council	Premises licence variation	£ 23.00
21-Aug	Zen Internet	Broadband	£ 32.40
22-Aug	BrightHR	HR services	£ 24.30
22-Aug	PKF Littlejohn	External review	£ 504.00
22-Aug	Busy Fingers (Cllr Jackson)	Plan scanning	£ 19.80
23-Aug	Staff costs	August payroll	£ 4,237.70
23-Aug	CPRE	Annual membership	£ 36.00
24-Aug	Casual bar staff	Bar staffing	£ 30.00
29-Aug	Amanda King	Westwoods cleaning	£ 128.00
31-Aug	Graham Stock	Portable appliance testing	£ 55.00
31-Aug	Mainstream Digital	Telephone line	£ 0.82
31-Aug	Grundon	Waste collection	£ 102.86
01-Sep	McCracken and Sons	Grounds maintenance	£ 1,527.30
02-Sep	Alby Belcher	Allotment fuel	£ 9.79
05-Sep	Smiths of Gloucester	Asbestos survey	£ 492.00
06-Sep	Yates Plumbing	Repair leak on WC	£ 64.20
	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>		<b>£ 15,744.51</b>