**DRAFT POULTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11th March 2024**

**AT 7 PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr. Simon Collyer-Bristow (Chair)

Cllr. Ed Hyslop (Vice Chair)

Cllr. Chris Davies

Cllr. Tom Gillibrand

Cllr. Lisa Spivey (County & District Councillor)

Mrs. Heather Harris (Clerk)

No members of the public attended the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence.**

All members of the Council were present.

1. **Approval of Minutes.**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11th December were approved and signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

1. **District Councillor’s Report.**

Local Plan Consultation

As I reported in February, the Local Plan consultation is ongoing and the period for responses has been extended to the 7th April.

I would encourage you to respond as a Parish Council and also individually if you so wish.

This can be on any aspect of the Local Plan, not just about your parish!

What do you think new homes in the Cotswolds should look like? Would you like to see more employment opportunities in the district? If so, where should they be sited? What about rainwater collection and permeable surfaces to alleviate flood risk? And anything else you think is important to shape the future of our District to 2041.

We’d love to hear from you.

Once the plan is made, it’s too late to change or add policies, so this is really the time to get involved in terms of planning policies.

Just as a reminder, the consultation consists of:

• updated Local Plan policies.

• A vision, objectives and development strategy topic paper that starts the process of how we address development needs to 2041.

• A Call for Sites that invites people to indicate available land that can deliver development needs up to 2041. This can include land for housing, employment, renewable energy, green spaces, nature, etc.

• An ‘initial ideas’ consultation document that starts the process for developing a Framework Masterplan for Cirencester Town Centre.

And you can engage by:

ENGAGE ONLINE

Everyone on the council’s Local Plan mailing list will be notified when the consultation document starts. We strongly encourage local communities and individuals to engage online via your.cotswold.gov.uk-the council’s new consultation system. Should members of the public wish comments may be made by email or letter.

A PDF version of the documents and the supporting evidence can, once the consultation is live, be viewed or downloaded via https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning- policy/evidence-base-and-monitoring/ Alternatively, it can be viewed, and comments made at your.cotswold.gov.uk.

LOCATIONS OF HARD COPIES

Copies will also be available to view at all libraries in the district and at the District Council offices in Cirencester (Trinity Road, GL7 1PX) and Moreton-in-Marsh (Moreton Area Centre, High Street, GL56 0AZ).

If you would like a hard copy of the document when available, then please contact the Forward Planning team to arrange collection / delivery.

TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

All Town and Parish Councils (and Libraries) will be notified in advance, and in due course further correspondence, as well as a hard copy of the consultation documents (excluding the draft policies – but available on request), will be sent to Town and Parish Councils that have a Principal Settlement (as listed in policy DS1 of the adopted Local Plan).

Town and Parish Councils will be asked to promote the consultation with local communities.

Crowdfund Cotswold

The next round of funding for projects is now live. If you have a project, you think might be relevant, please have a look at the website or contact me or Joseph Walker at CDC.

Town and Parish Council Forum

We held a forum on the 28th February and had Ian Simpson from Bledington in to talk about the work they have done on flood alleviation and Nick Hunt from Somerford Keynes presenting the work they have started on establishing a joined up footpath network in the parish and connecting it to Ashton Keynes, South Cerney and Kemble parishes.

Both speakers were well informed and answered questions about their experiences.

The next Town and Parish Forum will be in June.

A short survey will be coming soon to ask about format and topics.

It would be great if you could let us know what would be of interest to you.

Budget setting

The council set its annual budget on the 21st February.

Inflationary pressures and staff pay increases mean that councils are facing difficult decisions about the level of service they provide on statutory duties and whether they can continue with discretionary services. This testing time also means generating income through fees and charges, decisions no council takes lightly.

Through careful budgeting and financial management, Cotswold District Council is not about to go bankrupt, but the next 5 years are filled with uncertainty and challenges which can’t be ignored.

We have revised our current fees and charges to try to generate small surpluses in the years 24/25 and 25/26 so that the more difficult years later in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) are bolstered.

Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties

At Cabinet on March 7th, cabinet agreed to introduce a Council Tax Premium on Second homes and a premium on long term empty properties.

The aim of this is to bring back into use empty homes to help the housing crisis in the Cotswolds and to potentially discourage some short-term rents in properties which could be used for long term rental, again helping to accommodate local people living and working in the Cotswolds.

Exemption applies as per government guidelines currently being consulted on.

Changes to Planning Call in for Committee.

Changes have been made to the planning committee councillor call in protocol. If the Councillor believes that an application may be best to be considered by the committee, they need to alert the planning officer within 28 days of receiving the planning notification rather than waiting until the officer report is issued.

This should help to ease the time delays on some applications.

In order for an application to be heard by the committee, there still needs to be material planning reasons for the referral.

Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday 20th March 6pm Full Council.

Cllr. Hyslop raised issues around flooding and sewage with Cllr. Spivey. She responded that there is a statutory obligation to allow water connection. However, there is now a Planning Checklist which the developer has to complete before applying for planning permission. They are required to contact the water company and complete information before houses are occupied.

The Chair asked about the Council Tax for Airbnb houses. Cllr. Spivey said that Airbnb’s were exempt from business rates and Council Tax as they are a business and must be rented out 90 days. This will change in the future to 180 days availability for rental. She said it was a situation that was complex and expensive to enforce. She said that in the Government’s Budget Statement a double Council Tax levy was put forward. She said that there is a shortage of long-term rental properties in the Cotswolds.

1. **County Councillor’s Report.**

Adult Social Care Consultation

The Council has launched a consultation on how much residents think it is fair to contribute to care costs.

The consultation is available here:

https://haveyoursaygloucestershire.uk.engagementhq.com/fairer-contributions-policy

Fostering

The Council continues to have high numbers of children needing to be looked after.

If you could offer a space in your home as a foster carer then please do get in touch.

https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering/

Build Back Better

Final call for applications! I still have some funds left in my Build Back Better pot. The money must be spent by the end of the year, so please do get in touch if you have or know of an organisation or community group who would benefit.

Examples of projects I have backed:

- Playground refurbishments

- I-pads for digitally excluded school pupils

- Village hall solar panels

- Read with me program to support children reading

- Cotswold Lakes Trust summer program to provide experiences disadvantaged children

- Local girl guide group

Highways and Flooding

I continue to be very busy with all matter’s highways and localised flooding. I believe that the majority of the most urgent issues are in hand, with action planned, being taken or been taken. Please let me know if there are any flooding issues that you need some help with.

It’s “pothole” season and I am very aware of the general state of dis-repair on our local road network.

The “Fix My Street” tool is the most efficient way of reporting potholes, broken drain covers, overgrown hedges and a large number of highways related issues, including fly-tipping and pavement issues.

https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/

It’s important to log the issues as that way should an incident occur, then there is a trail to follow on when the repair was made (or not!).

I am working with the local highways manager, Richard Gray who retires at the end of March, and his successor, Gill Portlock on identifying areas where my councillor “Highways Local” funds can be best used in the new financial year, so do let me know if there are small schemes you think are relevant.

I continue to lobby for more funding (and a different, non-quantitative set of criteria) for our rural roads. It often feels like the big towns get all the money and we are forgotten because the numbers don’t stack up.

Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday 20th March 10am Full Council**.**

1. **Financial Report.**

There were no payments into the Current account.

Payments made from the Current account:

HMRC (PAYE) £148.60

Clerk’s Wages (October-March) £594.14

Balances as at 11th March 2023: £

Current account 5612.01

Deposit account 4833.45

Long term Deposit account 15918.22

1. **Speeding & Traffic Report.**

Cllr. Hyslop said that he has a meeting on Thursday with Richard Grey and his successor to discuss the poles for the speed cameras. The Police approval for the sites has already been agreed. A quote is required for the installation of the poles. Cllr. Hyslop is keen to get a definite timescale and price from the meeting.

Cllr. Hyslop discuss the system for the Fix my Street enquiries as some are closed even though the work has yet to be undertaken. Cllr. Spivey said the system had many flaws. The hedge which encroaches onto the footpath outside Springbank was again discussed.

1. **Report on Flooding & Sewage.**

Cllr. Davies reported that the Lot Lane sewage issue was still on going. The Chair said that during excessive rainfall, raw sewage was bubbling up from the manhole in Lot Lane and at Apple Tree Cottage also, the manhole cover at The Kestrels. Cllr. Davies informed Cllr. Spivey that this situation had been reported and had been on-going since well before 2007. Cllr. Spivey said that she now has a monthly meeting with Thames Water as she is the Working Group Chair. She said that she is trying to hold them to account and would raise this issue at the next meeting. Cllr. Gillibrand said that he had reported an issue to Thames Water recently.

Cllr. Davies said that he had been in touch with Lawrence King and that the bund would be extended in the autumn, this has helped delay water in Bell Lane. It was noted that the attenuation pond at Wheelers Rise was empty during the recently heavy rainfall, but the gardens were waterlogged and Cllr. Davies wonder whether it was connected at all.

Cllr. Spivey is lobbying for a dedicated person to liaise between the Planning Officers on flooding issues. Cllr. Davies said the Local Flood Authority should be responsible.

Cllr. Gillibrand said that all issues needed to be logged as this creates a digital trail.

1. **Report on Playground Refurbishment & Fundraising.**

Cllr. Spivey said the Build Back Better fund had received Poulton Parish Council’s application and is being processed. This will give £3000 towards the playground refurbishment.

Cllr. Hyslop said the Crowdfunding deadline is the 20th April and when the pledge target is reached, Cotswold District Council will donate up to £10,000. Spacehive, who administer the Crowdfunding, take a 10% commission on pledges. Cllr. Hyslop will discuss with Joseph Walker, the best way to protect monies pledged by villagers and organisations. Cllr. Spivey said a decision will be made in May on funding from CDC and monies will be released around July. There is a minimum of 20 pledges required. Ideally, multiple smaller pledges are better than a few large ones but, the target must be reached before CDC will donate to the project.

Cllr. Hyslop and Cllr. Gillibrand have narrowed down the equipment for the playground and this was shown to the Council. Cllr. Davies said that repairs and improvements to existing equipment should also be part of the project. Cllr. Gillibrand said that an additional £4000 would be used to refurbish the bark and surround to the OXO Tower and the Spacenet.

The current funding will be made up as follows:

Poulton Parish Council £15000

Cotswold District Council £10000

Build Back Better £3000

With the rest coming from donations within the village.

An article will appear in the PoultonEye outlining the way forward with the project and it was noted that there had already been a great deal of interest from the village.

1. **Adoption of new Policies.**

The Council discussed the new Safeguarding Policy and Equality Policy. It was resolved to adopt the policies once amendments were completed.

1. **Any Other Business.**

Church Lane – the pothole at Church Lane will be repaired and funded by the Church, Poulton Playing Field & Allotment Charity and residents of the lane.

Car blocking access to the Englands – a blue car is regularly blocking the entrance to Englands and making it difficult for maintenance equipment to get by. The Clerk will speak to the owner.

Poulton Cricket Club – there will be a Beer Festival on 28-30th June and a Quiz Night. All villagers are invited.

Signage on Priory Lane – there was a discussion about whether the new signs have planning permission.

Nether House – planning permission has been received for a new agricultural building opposite Nether House. The Council felt it would have been better placed on the same side as the existing buildings.

Village Noticeboard – Cllr. Davies commented that the noticeboard frame needs treatment. The Clerk said that the both the village noticeboard and the Parish Council noticeboard are in a bad state since posters were glued to them during the last election.

Council email protocol – Cllr. Davies asked that emails were replied to within 3 working days.

1. **Appointment of Trustees – closed session.**

The Councillors discussed each application received for the positions of Trustee for the Poulton Playing Field & Allotment Charity. It was resolved that the following candidates would be appointed:

Natalie Baird-Clarke

Chris Davies

Simon Hall

The new Trustees will join existing Trustees, Caroline Allanson and Sanjay Saxena. The Council wished to thank Roger Davies, Paul Burnip and Claire Turner for all their hard work and service to the Charity over many years.

The meeting ended at 9.30pm.

The next meeting will be held on the 13th May 2024 at 7pm followed by the Annual Meeting at 7.30pm.