**THE ORDINARY MEETING OF NORTH NIBLEY PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD ON MONDAY 5th JUNE 2017, IN THE VILLAGE HALL, NORTH NIBLEY, AT 7.30 PM.**

**Present:** Mr K Brown, (Chair) Mrs J Burton; Mr S Hale, Mr K Larkin, Mr D Palmer, Mr L. Smitherman.

**District Councillors:** Mr K Tucker

**County Councillor**: Dr J Cordwell

**The Clerk:** Mrs E Oakley

**The Chairman opened** the Parish Council Meeting.

1. **The Chairman invited apologies.** Apologies had been received from Cllr D Purnell and District Cllr G Butcher.
2. **Declaration of Interests**. The Chairman invited members to declare any Interests relating to this Meeting.There were no declarations of interest.
3. **The Council approved and signed the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 8th May as a true record.** The Minutesof the May Annual Meeting of the Council had previously been distributed to all members and displayed on the public notice boards and the website**. All members agreed the Minutes should be signed, as a true and accurate record**. The Minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.
4. **The Council noted matters arising from the Minutes, not covered by agenda items.**

* **Internal Audit.** The clerk informed councillors the GAPTC internal auditor had submitted a five page listing of evidence required to assess council procedures for the 2016/17 financial year. This audit operated to detailed, “industry standard” rules. The clerk worked on compiling evidence in conjunction with the Chair over a two week period, and the required pack to include minutes, financial documents and annual accounts, was collected by the auditor on 30th May. The clerk had previously informed the Burial Clerk that the auditor may contact her separately to review burial and cemetery record keeping. The clerk also produced a listing of cemetery payments for the financial year 2016 to 2017 for the Burial Clerk to compare with her own records.
* **Internal Audit outcome.** The clerk reported the annual audit had subsequently been signed off as very good by the auditor and without reservation. However, there were items to address that she would include in her final report to GAPTC: Section 137 items needed to be accounted for in a new column in the cashbook spreadsheet. This was a requirement even where there were no items relevant under this heading in the financial year. The council relationship with the Burial Clerk required more clarity in its employment relationship. Cllr L Smitherman advised the issue of the Burial Clerk’s status be best addressed at the time if a successor was required. Cllr L Smitherman advised the successful outcome of the audit be included in the monthly report to On The Edge.
* **Grant monies for the Talking Newspapers.** Having left several messages the clerk was able to speak to the Secretary who advised they receive funding from various sources but welcome further contributions. It costs several thousand to provide the service and to maintain a studio at Dursley. Editing and recordings are carried out on a Friday morning with the main source of information being stories from, The Gazette. The Secretary undertook to provide a letter stating which areas funding was needed for. This to be considered by council. (Agenda item).
* **Cemetery Parking Space.** The clerk reported the new sign with the revised wording for outside the cemetery had arrived by courier and it was presented at the council meeting. Cllr D Palmer and Cllr D Purnell undertook erect the sign close to the parking bay, either by rings or hooks, or possibly on a post for greater visibility. Cllr D Palmer agreed to investigate the feasibility of a post.
* **Affordable Housing.** The clerk had requested an update from District Councillor Catherine Braun to determine the progress of the affordable housing initiative as described at the council’s AGM, with particular respect to the new Housing Enabler post. The clerk reported to the meeting that details of the new job had been subsequently received and the closing date for the part time role was today, the day of the council meeting.
* **On The Edge.** The clerk had designed a contacts box with the parish council website address and clerk’s email address and phone number to be included in future parish council pages as a standard item. This had been acknowledged by the editors. A recent edition contained the Parish Council Annual Report insert with the website and clerk’s details listed at the beginning and end of the report.
* **BT Phone boxes consultation.** The clerk had requested information on the outcome of the BT consultation earlier this year and had been redirected back to the District Authority Planning department by BT. (Agenda item).
* **Planning Item.**The resubmitted application at Swinhay now included two new statements from the applicants. (Agenda item and documents circulated). The previous council response to Highways was submitted directly to the Highways Officer in addition to the main Planning authority contact after the May council meeting.
* **Initial Training for the Speed Awareness Project.** The clerk had contacted the retired clerk with the previous list of volunteers to request email contacts for them. These were then used, in addition to the email contact provided by Cllr K Tucker for a local resident who had previously raised speeding issues. The speed equipment had arrived by courier. (Agenda item).
* **Insurance Renewal**. The clerk confirmed the signed cheque and remittance advice were posted to ensure continuity of insurance cover from 1st June 2017.
* **Neighbourhood Warden.** The clerk had not automatically received, but had re-requested a monthly summary from the Neighbourhood Warden with a view to including this with the Clerk’s Update report to council each month. The Neighbourhood Warden was currently on annual leave.
* **Trees at Binley Lane.** The clerk had received a copy of a report with photographs from the Neighbourhood Warden to confirm that there was tree overgrowth in Binley Lane. The chairman has subsequently confirmed that Highways have been to the site to cut back a significant part of overhanging tree growth. Cllr L Smitherman advised he had been consulted about the trees location. He confirmed some work had been carried out but the large tree on top still appeared loose. If a landowner had been informed that a tree is dangerous it was the landowner’s responsibility to deal with.
* **Trees on New Road.** Cllr D Palmer undertook to speak to the landowner adjacent to the B4060 on the corner where overgrowth had also been reported near the centre of the village.

1. **The Chairman closed the Meeting for Public Discussion and Questions.**

**The Chairman re-opened** the Meeting without further discussion.

1. **The Council considered and commented upon the following Planning Application:**

**Application Number: S.17/0880/FUL.** Location: Land Adjacent To Swinhay Small Holding, North Nibley, Gloucestershire. Application Type: Full Planning Permission. Description: Erection of Barn style Stabling and Menage. Additional correspondence and map from applicant.

At its meeting on 5th June the Parish Council considered the further information submitted by the applicant in letters dated 15th May. After careful consideration the Parish Council resolved to object to the application for the main reasons set out: It is noted the applicant is now saying the stabling is for 14 horses having previously applied for 18. Although they now state 14 there is clearly potential for this number to increase both within the proposed building and in the retained buildings on site. Even at 14 horses this represents a significant increase over the current permitted use of the site and would result in an unacceptable intensification of use in this quiet rural location with inadequate and substandard access. The size of the proposed development and the associated investment is more than could reasonably be regarded as personal use only and the Parish Council firmly believe this would lead to a commercialisation of the site with extra activity, traffic generation and noise to the detriment of the safety and amenity of the adjoining area which is situated within an A.O.N.B.

On the question of traffic the Parish Council does not accept there will be no increase in traffic. Based on experience the Council does not accept the need for delivery of hay and straw will be nullified. The use of the top field for hay production is totally inadequate to support the needs of 14 horses when applying accepted equestrian standards. A considerably larger area would be required and as a consequence delivery of hay, straw, and other feed and bedding will still be required. The applicant accepts additional trips will be required for such users as vets and instructors. Also it is noted the applicant is involved in a series of offsite activities including racing, point to point, polo cross, and eventing which will necessitate frequent movement of large vehicles and horses boxes to and from the site.

Taken together with the other frequent trips of the applicant, partners, helpers, and other visitors, would undoubtedly lead to an unacceptable intensification of traffic use of the adjoining narrow lanes to the detriment of the safety and amenity of the area. It is noted that adjoining neighbours have objected on these grounds and the Parish Council fully supports those objections.

In addition the Parish Council considers the size and dimensions of the proposed building to be excessive in this locality and out of character. The proposed use of lighting to the ménage will be visually obtrusive and give rise to light pollution especially in the winter months which is unacceptable in this rural locality. The Parish Council also considers problems of waste disposal, disposal of muck, and surface water have not been adequately dealt with to normal acceptable standards and there is a real risk of pollution to the watercourse crossing the site. Also there appears to be no toilet facilities for the many workers and visitors to the site.

Having carefully considered the application and additional material submitted, the Parish Council continues to strongly object and considers the proposal to be contrary to a number of Local Plan policies including ES3,ES4,ES7,ES9 and CP14, and accordingly request that planning permission be refused.

1. **To note the following Planning Applications decisions by Stroud DC Planning:**

There were none to report.

1. **To receive a written District Council Report. The Council received a** written report from District Councillor K Tucker (verbally) on behalf of the ward’s District Councillors. The Chairman thanked Councillor Tucker for his report.
2. **To receive a written County Council Report.** **The Council received** a written County Council Report from County Councillor Dr J Cordwell. The Chairman thanked Councillor Cordwell for his report.
3. **To receive and discuss Reports of Committees and Meetings** **attended by Parish Councillors and the Clerk.**

**Joint Cluster Group. The clerk** informed councillors she had received correspondence from the service manager running Joint Cluster Group meetings bi annually confirming that just five of the fifty two Parish Councils within the district had sent a representative to the last meeting. Cllr L Smitherman reported a delay in the receipt of minutes and sometimes lack of notice for the next meeting although topics discussed could be valuable. The clerk undertook to write to the service manager to inform him of the importance of prompt minutes and valuable topics that would encourage higher attendance.

**Cllr Ken Brown** informed councillors that the item of the Holme tree in the closed churchyard, subsequent to the previously reported Parochial Church Council meeting, had been referred to the church authorities at archdeacon level.

**Cllr Ken Brown** informed councillors that tree works on the Knoll was almost completed. But there was a need to re-seed to match up with existing grass. Councillors discussed the variety of methods available for re-seeding. Cllr Ken Brown advised he had a six metre seeder available. Cllr D Palmer advised he pulls up saplings.

1. **Parish Council Finances.**

**11(1) To approve the Invoices and draw up cheques for items on the enclosed Payments Schedule.** The Council received and approved:

* Speedar: speed gun, tripod and case kit. **£1,296.00**

**11 (2) To consider quotes for scheduled work.**

Cllr L Smitherman presented to the council the second quote for the horse gate proposed for Wood Lane and Cllr K Brown presented a third quote for the same proposed work. Councillors considered the three quotes for comparison in terms of cost and construction qualities, as the objective was to slow down on the hill cyclists and limit others in terms of unauthorised access. Councillors agreed that Cllr L Smitherman would refer to the original contractor for a further quote from the same contractor but for a lighter weight design. This would be equivalent to the lighter weight construction shown in the specification for Cllr Ken Brown’s quote. It was also noted that the gap in the final gate selected needs to be narrower to prevent unauthorised access. Councillors acknowledged that Cllr D Purnell who had supplied the first quote for the horse gate, would be in attendance at the July council meeting and a final review of all the quotes received by councillors could be made at that stage.

**11(3) To receive correspondence on grant** funding from Cotswold Vale Talking Newspaper. Councillors agreed that £50 be awarded now that the explanatory letter had been received. The clerk confirmed £50 had been agreed in principle at the March council meeting during the grant applications item.

**11(4). Annual Review of council standing orders document.** The clerk informed councillors that a review process for this document was required for the 2016/2017 annual audit procedures. However, the document is able to be updated according to changes in council practice, (refer section 22 of the document**)** and can be an on-going process as required.

**11(5). Annual Review of council financial regulations document.** The clerk informed councillors that a review is similarly required to meet audit procedures and that the document can be updated according to changes in council working practices. Cllr L Smitherman informed the council that a Section 137 clause as stated by the internal auditor need be now specifically included in the financial regulations. The clerk agreed to include the clause and present the revised regulations at the next council meeting.

**11(6). Review of annual bank reconciliation statements.** The clerk informed councillors that the three statements submitted showed balances for the three accounts to cover the financial year as a whole for 2016 to 2017. Two of the accounts were substantially savings accounts and inactive other than for receipt of interest payments. The Treasurer’s account was the active account which received payments and expenditure during the year to include council administration and pay items. The council agreed the bank reconciliation statements.

**11(7**) **Annual review of system of internal controls**, **including risk management** to consider it adequate and effective. The clerk informed councillors that a review is similarly required to meet audit procedures. The clerk informed councillors she had highlighted some minor changes according to the change in clerk part way through the financial year. These reflected a change in office location and also noted that the filing cabinet was no longer in the clerk’s possession but had been returned to the councillor who had made it available previously. Cllr L Smitherman highlighted the section “Computer files” to reflect good practice. The wording, “The Parish Council uses the Clerk’s personal computer” needed be replaced with, “The clerk uses the council’s laptop”. The clerk agreed to include the clause and present the revised regulations at the next council meeting.

**11(8)** **Review and approval of statement of accounts for financial year 2016 to 2017.** The clerk informed councillors that this document was a requirement for both the auditor and end of year procedures. The former had now seen and approved the document. However, the information was substantially a summary of the information presented in the three reconciliation statements for the three council accounts. The council agreed the statement of accounts.

**11(9**) **Review of updated asset register** as requested by external auditor for 2015 to 2016. The clerk informed councillors that the asset register was required to be updated by the external auditor for the preceding financial year to reflect the purchase and value of the defibrillator. This change had recently been made to the asset register by the clerk after discussion with the Chair. Cllr L Smitherman advised the asset register also required to be further updated now that the speed gun and associated equipment had been purchased under the Police and Crime Commissioner grant awarded during the last financial year. The clerk undertook to include the updated clause.

**11(10)** **To sign Section One of Annual Governance Statement 2016/17 on the Council’s annual return for year ending 31st March 2017.** The clerk informed councillors that this document had been signed off by the internal auditor. Outstanding was the inclusion of the minute reference on the form after the drafting of the June council minutes and before the form was sent to the external auditor by the clerk.

**11(11)** **To sign Section Two Accounting Statement 2016/17 on the Council’s annual return for year ending 31st March 2017.** The clerk informed councillors that the clerk and the chair had worked on the preparation of the document to be sent to the external auditor. Outstanding was the inclusion of the minute reference on the form after the drafting of the June council minutes and before the form was sent to the external auditor. The clerk would confer with the chair as to the final set of documentation to be sent.

**12/ To receive and approve Cemetery and Closed Churchyard Reports.**

The council acknowledged the work of the councillors who cut back the tree close by the family grave near the line of trees at the rear of the cemetery. This was in response to a request referred from the Burial Clerk received from relatives visiting their grandparent’s grave earlier this year.

The clerk had received and banked the sum of £20 as agreed at the May council meeting for installation of a new family plaque on the memorial garden back wall. The position is on the left hand side of existing plaques. Following acceptance of his previous quote for work, both the former and the clerk had contacted the contractor selected to request key project details to include a project specification, for the major work to extend the memorial garden and treat cemetery paths. This has not been forthcoming to date despite several requests. The clerk undertook to write to the contractor formally with signed for delivery to request a detailed specification to determine whether they wished to undertake the work. The letter would include a specific date to meet for a site visit in June. The clerk undertook to liaise with Cllr D Purnell concerning contact with the contractor.

**Closed Churchyard**

The clerk reported a recent inspection showed the wall continues to appear in a reasonable condition but this will be monitored twice monthly now that the growing season has generated new growth on verges especially. Thanks were extended to Cllr Dave Palmer who cut back verges and new ivy growth earlier in the spring.

**13/ To receive annual inspection report on the cemetery and churchyard.** The clerk carried out an annual assessment of the war memorial and cemetery memorials during May as mainly a photographic record, (separate report) and the annual report was included in the pack to the internal auditor to confirm adherence to the council’s policies and procedures. The clerk agreed that a future annual assessment need be conducted in conjunction with a councillor. Overall the annual inspection showed the war memorial is in reasonable condition but with two slightly chipped areas at the base. Some burial memorials show weathering damage including several larger stone cross memorials which have fallen horizontally.

**14/To receive update report on BT consultation on phone boxes.** Following discussion at the April council meeting, the clerk had contacted the BT manager who responded, “In regard to the payphone review you will have to refer to the County or District council that took part in the review”. Consequently the recent message from the district authority planning department was received,” Further to email to you dated the 28th February 2017, I am not aware that we have received any further notifications from BT regarding the phone boxes”. Councillors requested the clerk refer to previous council minutes where it was agreed to spruce up the phone boxes in the interim period as well as purchase some paint for this purpose. The clerk undertook to ask Cllr D Purnell to purchase this.

**15/ To note update on broadband and mobile issues.** The Clerk informed councillors she had made a number of attempts to secure an update on the broadband project which was previously scheduled for completion by the end of May. The Community Fibre Partnerships Manager had responded to this recent message, “I can only assume you are asking about progress on cabinet number 1 on Dursley exchange that is located on Warren Hill and which serves the centre of the village. According to the engineering progress reports, it should be available for service by late summer”.

Cllr L Smitherman informed councillors that there had been no engineer vehicle seen in the site area for a good period of time. Cllr D Palmer had emailed a BT contact on the wiring side of the business but received no answer, although he had subsequently spoken to the deputy on the wiring side. Cllr L Smitherman reminded the council that Matt Lloyd from BT had promised at the council’s AGM in April to keep the council informed of project development especially any date changes. The clerk undertook to contact Matt Lloyd to invite him to attend the July Parish council meeting.

**16/ To receive the drafted Health and Safety policy.** The clerk reported she hadstarted the process of updating the health and safely policy in discussion with the chair. She undertook to secure a model Health and Safety policy from the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town councils and include these new elements within the standard proforma to present to a future council meeting.

**17/ To receive update on Data Protection Registration requirements.** The clerk reported she had been required to investigate the council’s registration status for the annual audit. For this the council was required to show, "Evidence of current registration with the Information Commissioner under the Data Protection Act". After completing the on line assessment and speaking directly to the IC, the clerk concluded North Nibley PC is not currently required to register according to its current activities. Employee records are exempt and the Planning data the council downloads is already in the public domain via the District Council who would have their own registration if required. The Parish council does not produce its own newsletter but contributes to a separate local one and does not advertise on behalf of third parties, thereby confirming it is currently exempt from registration.

**18. To receive a report on Speed Awareness Project Planning.** The clerk informed councillors that ten volunteers had now come forward for the speed awareness training**.** Some additional interest in speed and traffic issues had been generated by the annual report insert in On The Edge. To adjust to the difficulty of securing attendance of the trainer’s minimum requirement of six volunteers at one training session, the clerk had liaised with the trainer as to the best way of forward. It was agreed to offer two identical training sessions fairly close together within the same month of July.

**19. To receive for information details of Correspondence received.** The clerk informed councillors she had received notification from GAPTC that funding was still available to councils who had previously received Transparency funds to cover website monthly costs and staff time for the whole of 2017/18. The clerk agreed to follow up the grant funding opportunity with GAPTC. The clerk stated that following parishioner correspondence, she had reported to Highways a complaint about growth on the grass verge adjacent to the pavement on the B4060 obscuring the view when crossing the road.

**20**. **Additional Items.** Cllr K Larkin reported to councillors that the caravan in the Innocks estate area that indicated a permanent residence had been removed. District Cllr K Tucker confirmed that he was due to attend a meeting tomorrow to discuss the issue with enforcement and housing officers. If the residence was self-contained this would require planning permission.

Cllr D Palmer informed councillors he had received information from Grimes and Coscombe Funeral directors including possible new designs for the new memorial garden area. However, there was no rush in deciding on these. Cllr D Palmer showed councillors a photo of Wotton’s memorial garden to give an idea of what was feasible. There was also the suggestion of replacing the memorial garden grass with a membrane over the grass. However, councillors agreed to defer consideration of these cemetery items until a future meeting when there was time to discuss in more detail.

Cllr D Palmer informed councillors about the trees at Forthay on the bank outside the boundary that forces traffic into the middle of the road. There was concern that these have become a size they may fall on the house. Cllr D Palmer would report the issue to Highways. Cllr J Cordwell informed councillors Highways had a specialised tree officer.

Cllr D Palmer informed councillors that he had treated the moss on the bench on the triangle opposite the bus stop. Councillors discussed the problem of motorists parking on footpaths, for example outside the village shop. The clerk agreed to contact the Neighbourhood Warden and to include reference to responsible parking in her monthly parish council report for On The Edge. It was agreed this article would also make mention of residents responsibility for cutting back overhanging growth over public areas from residential properties.

**There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25 pm.**

**The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 3rd July at 7.30 pm.**