**THE ORDINARY MEETING OF NORTH NIBLEY PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD ON MONDAY 7th AUGUST 2017, IN THE VILLAGE HALL, NORTH NIBLEY, AT 7.30 PM.**

**Present:** Mr K Brown, (Chair) Mrs J Burton; Mr K Larkin, Mr D Palmer, Mr L. Smitherman, Lois Taylor, (Affordable Housing Enabler). One member of the public attended.

**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 Mr D Purnell, District Cllr C Braun and District Cllr G Butcher. Mr S Hale had tendered his resignation to the clerk and the chair prior to the meeting.
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 Ordinary Council Meeting held on 3rd July as a true record.** The Minutesof the July Ordinary 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.**
* **External Audit.** Therequiredinformation for 2016/17 financial year was finalised to meet the Grant Thornton deadline and the documentation posted as signed-for delivery. The clerk subsequently received a phone call from Grant Thornton requesting more information for the variance in income between the financial year (2016/17) and the previous financial year. The clerk drew attention to the explanation in the written submission, the sale of Breakheart land, and the receipt of two fairly substantial grants, (Transparency Fund and Police and Crime commissioner Fund). This account was described as perfect and there were received no further queries to date.
* **Road closures**. The clerk had been notified of a number of reports of future road closures for reasons to include BT related works and had itemised these separately.
* **Village Hall fees.** The clerk had received two invoices for hall hire. Noting the disparity in hourly rates for evening hall hire and day time hire for speed awareness training, the clerk queried the rates and received an adjusted rate for the speed training sessions.
* **Pensions.** The clerk had received formal confirmation from the Pensions Regulator of her on line submission. As this letter was not as informative as hoped, the clerk undertook to request a full statement of the council’s submission for reference.
* **Defibrillator**. This was employed for the first time since installation in a live situation. In the event the device was removed from its casing to another local address, but not used and subsequently returned to its casing a few days later. The clerk liaised with the Ambulance Trust and the supplier concerning this incident.
* **Cotswold Vale Talking** **Newspaper service.** Following their recent AGM the clerk attended a studio recording session in July as an observer at Kingshill House, Dursley. The clerk subsequently agreed with the Secretary a form of wording for an article. This was included in the summer double issue of On The Edge with the aim of increasing local awareness as well as take up of the service.
* **Highways.** The clerk reported a number of items to include hedge overgrowth in Barrs Lane and a blocked gully in Wood Lane. The clerk did not receive further comments for the Highways Satisfaction Survey so did not submit a formal response on behalf of the council.
* **New Bus Services**. The clerk received details of new bus timetables for the 60 and 62 services from early September and circulated to councillors. It is understood from a local transport lobbying group that the new timetable offers better links with trains at Cam and Dursley station.
* **Council Grant funding**. The clerk had received a request in July for grant funding and had directed the secretary to the revised council grant application process to be available for new applicants early in 2018.
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: Application Reference: S.17/1450/COU** **Change of Use. Church Farm. The Cottage, Frog Lane, North Nibley.** The council made the following comments: In order to secure the retention and renovation of the original barn structure the Parish Council does not object in principle to the conversion of Barn 1 to a holiday let subject to the use being restricted to a holiday let only by means of a Section 106 Agreement. This should be similar to the Agreement relating to the barn next to the New Inn at Waterley Bottom i.e. use restricted to holiday let only, not to be let or occupied as a person’s sole or main place or residence, not to be occupied or allow to be let to any one person for more than 56 days in a calendar year. The Parish Council does however consider the works and use should be confined to the original barn footprint and structure and should not include the two temporary structures on the north elevation which do not form part of the historic barn. The size of the original barn is sufficient to accommodate a suitable letting for holiday use only. The application should be amended accordingly. The Parish Council therefore requests these amendments are made before any approvals are given.

**Receipt of consultee notice informing applicant Appeal, S.17/0880/FUL, Swinhay**, **North Nibley.** The council acknowledged receipt of the notice of Appeal and in response made the following comments: The appellant’s grounds of appeal do not override the Parish Council’s fundamental objections to the proposal as set out in its objection letters dated 14th May and 6th June 2017 to Stroud District Council. In addition the Parish Council wishes to add the following points which it requests the Inspector to take into account together with its original objections:

 1. The officer’s report clearly states the extant permission on this site only allows stabling of horses ancillary to the agricultural use of the land. The current use involves horses owned or visited by people other than the landowner or user of the land. The horses stabled at the site also are used for activities offsite such as racing, point-to-point, and eventing so cannot be regarded as ancillary to the agricultural use of the land. We note that Stroud consider the current use to be unauthorised which is a fundamental point in the consideration of the appeal.

2. The officer’s report also raises the legitimate concern that the increased number of horses proposed, their quality and value would give rise to the need for full time care and security on site. This would therefore give rise to pressure for the provision of dwelling on site in a location well outside the settlement boundary which would be contrary to Local Plan policies in particular CP15. The Parish Council has consistently objected to such dwellings in the past and would be concerned at the creation of an unacceptable precedent in this case.

3. The Parish Council firmly believes the proposal would give rise to a commercialisation of, and intensification of use of the site for the reasons set out in previous correspondence. However even if this is for personal use, the Parish Council wish to stress the proposed increase in the number of horses from the current permitted use (see point 1 above) will give rise to an unacceptable intensification of use in this quiet rural location with inadequate and substandard access.

4. The Parish Council are also very concerned that if allowed, it will be extremely difficult for the Local Planning Authority to enforce any restrictions placed on the number of horses or their usage. It considers therefore, no increase in numbers or facilities should be permitted above the current permitted use to prevent further difficulties in the future.

The Parish Council therefore requests the Inspector to dismiss the appeal for the reasons set out in this letter and earlier objection letters dated 14th May and 6th June 2017. Finally as a statutory consultee the Parish Council wish to be represented at the accompanied site visit and should be grateful to be advised of the arrangements in due course.

The council also noted in relation to this Planning application that the prior response from Highways appeared not to address all the key issues. County Councillor John Cordwell was thanked for endeavouring to contact Highways on this issue during a holiday period. However, Cllr Cordwell stated that NPPF provisions makes it difficult for the County Council to object except where specific dangers arose.

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

**Application Number: Application Reference: S.17/1534/DISCON**. Mount Pleasant, Forthay, North Nibley. Discharge of condition 3 (Materials) of S.16/2888/FUL. Permission.

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. Cllr K Larkin requested further information on the County Council’s position on Highways matters. Cllr Cordwell responded that the response was restricted by NPPF conditions. The Chairman and councillors stated they had nonetheless recently identified several sites within the North Nibley parish, whereby overgrown hedges were creating dangerous conditions including to through traffic. Cllr L Smitherman noted that lorry drivers were allowed one breakage to vehicle mirrors before they became liable for replacement costs. Cllr Cordwell undertook to request an update on Highways response to these items and forward the response to councillors. The clerk undertook to construct a draft of a standardised letter to send to property owners responsible, to be circulated to councillors. Councillors agreed to submit names of owners who were due to receive letters, to the clerk.
3. **To receive and discuss Reports of Committees and Meetings** **attended by Parish Councillors and the Clerk.**

**Cllr Ken Brown** confirmed he had met a contractor at the cemetery to discuss a second quote for removal of the cemetery hedge. This quote was for both sides of the main gate to include the holly tree. This work would not include removal of the roots which would be too expensive.

**Cllr Dave Palmer** reported that the Tyndale Monument Trust had received a visit from representatives of the National Trust for the Wellington monument who were investigating how the Tyndale monument is maintained. This was a useful exercise and Tyndale monument representatives had been invited on a return visit to the Wellington monument.

1. **Parish Council Finances.**
2. **To approve the Invoices and draw up cheques for items on the enclosed Payments Schedule.** The Council received and approved:

 **North Nibley Village Hall. Parish Council meetings from May 2017 to July 2017.**

 **£36.00**

For the separate invoice from North Nibley Village Hall, (the main hall hire for speed awareness training sessions in July), the clerk agreed to request a resubmission of the invoice as the training sessions had used the small meeting room rather than the main hall meeting room.

1. **To consider quotes for scheduled work.** Cllr L Smitherman reported that on request for a second quote for the horse-gate, the company informed him that due to a twenty per cent increase in the price of metal, the quote could not match the price of the other quote already received. Cllr Ken Brown agreed to return to the supplier of the previous quote to determine if a reduced price was available for the specification for a lighter construction and a narrower gap. If the price was suitable then this supplier would be agreed on.
2. **To consider options for update of council annual grant application process**. The clerk thanked District Councillor Ken Tucker for his comprehensive digest of questions used in four examples of application forms for grant funding. He also stressed the importance of acting fairly across the parish, for example in terms of gender and ethnicity. These criteria could be monitored on a spreadsheet as part of the new grant funding process in due course. The clerk agreed to translate the recommended example questions into a new grant funding format for consideration by councillors at a future council meeting.
3. **To receive statements of council balances**. The clerk presented a statement of the July balances for the three separate council accounts. She highlighted, that sums due to be spent on key cemetery projects to include the memorial garden, cemetery paths and hedge work, would impact the Treasurer’s account balance by the autumn once work was completed and contractor invoices received. The monies received for the sale of Breakheart land in summer 2016 were received into the savings account for which there was no current cheque facility. Cllr L Smitherman recommended that a counter cheque be arranged through the council bank branch to be drawn on the main savings account for major cemetery works.
4. **To consider options for CILCA training.** The clerk informed councillors that the Certificate in Local Council Administration was the professional qualification for council clerks that her recent annual appraisal hadrequested she study for. The registration fee was £250 and portfolio work was submitted on-line over a study period of a year, although three additional months would be allowed for work submission in certain circumstances. The council agreed this course of study with the proviso that the clerk determine whether the £250 registration fee was 100% of the costs as a fixed fee or whether additional costs to the council would be incurred during year.

**12/ To receive and approve Cemetery and Closed Churchyard Reports. The clerk informed councillors** the Burial Clerk had received a complimentary message from a family who used to live in the area but moved away. They recently returned on a visit and passed on the message that the condition of the cemetery was much improved. A cemetery inspection by the clerk in early August showed the grass cutting was neatly done and appeared to be a tighter and neater cut than earlier in the season. However, the grass around family plaques was beginning to grow over the sides of plaques. The clerk undertook to determine from the contractor the date of the next cut scheduled for around plaques.

In anticipation of vases on the right hand side shelf of the memorial garden wall requiring to the relocated to the right once new works are underway, the Burial Clerk had started to contact the families involved. She had managed to speak directly to the younger generation of one of the families. Other family members appear to be away on holiday, so the Burial Clerk will continue to try to make contact to explain the changes. Cllr Ken Brown raised the question of the height of the shelf against the wall in the memorial garden. He will investigate whether the shelf could be lowered before the next council meeting to become an Agenda item. The clerk undertook to review in due course the Terms and Conditions of the cemetery once currently scheduled works in the cemetery and memorial garden were underway. The terms and conditions for the Wotton under Edge cemetery could usefully be consulted as an example.

The clerk had received and banked a cheque for £250 for a new double plot in the cemetery. Thanks were passed onto Cllr Dave Palmer who had investigated the mound in the cemetery to the right hand side of the central path and concluded the mound is an old tree stump that will likely rot away in time. The family of a deceased member who died in February 2016 are keen to erect a memorial. Now that just over a year has elapsed since burial, the Burial Clerk is in contact with the family to recommend they present the proposed memorial design and dimensions to the Parish Council this September or October.

Councillors informed the meeting that some more recent graves had had headstone memorials installed ahead of the twelve month rule period after interment. The clerk undertook to liaise with the Burial Clerk to draft a general letter to funeral directors to remind them of the rules for the timing of the erection of memorials. Funeral Directors needed to be reminded within six months of a new burial, of the cemetery rules for this purpose. The clerk had received a copy of a thank you letter from a parishioner to the Burial Clerk following resolution of the damage by the contractor’s accidental strimming of flowers on a relatives’ grave.

Cllr Dave Purnell had met the first contractor to discuss the cemetery hedge cut and a quote was subsequently received. A second contractor had also met Cllr Ken Brown in the cemetery to discuss a second quote for hedge works. These two quotes will be considered at the September council meeting.

In early August the clerk had received clarification from the contractor for the memorial garden and path works of items in the method statements previously submitted. He had also put forward a proposed start date at the beginning of the third week in August. The clerk had then requested receipt of a restatement of the method statements in line with this clarification and these are awaited. Councillors agreed that the start date was suitable, subject to signs being put up on the cemetery entrance and subject to work temporarily halting for funerals/ interments. The clerk would liaise with the Burial Clerk to inform the contractor of forthcoming funerals.

**Churchyard**

An inspection in early August showed that the wall continues in a reasonable condition but that there is now some extended ivy growth particularly on the wall in Church Lane. The ivy and possibly other growth appear to be growing down from the churchyard above. Cllr Dave Palmer had subsequently cut back some of the new ivy growth. The wall in Frog Lane continues in a reasonable condition. However, the gate to the far right of the wall and next to the residential property now appears to be slightly distorted, and the gate’s left hand side section now has a coating of what maybe green lichen or similar growth.

**13. To receive an introduction to her role from the new Affordable Housing Enabler.** (This item was brought forward to after item 4 on the Agenda due to the attendance of the new enabler at the meeting). Lois Taylor gave a brief introduction to her role as similar to that of her predecessor which would cover both urban and rural settings with an emphasis on facilitating grass roots ownership and stewardship. Cllr L Smitherman said that it was key to reignite the project from the perspective of past progress already made. Additionally to identify where work had stalled noting that projects were long term taking between five and six years. Councillors noted that progress had stalled for a number of reasons, including that Cllr Jane Burton noted the project had stalled with the end of funding for the predecessor. Prior to that point a number of meetings had been held. Cllr Ken Brown said that previously the stage had been reached where the council thought that affordable housing developers had bought the premium site identified, but this did not transpire. Councillors agreed it was disappointing there had been little progress as regards affordable housing initiatives over the last year. Although prior contact with Severn Vale Housing had been made the project need not be tied to this organisation in future. The second site identified behind the cemetery, and other sites, were much smaller and did not meet full needs for affordable housing development. Therefore the premium site still needed to be considered as a priority. Councillors requested that the new enabler pick up from where her predecessor had left off and that a separate meeting from the main council meeting be arranged to progress this. Cllr K Larkin agreed to act as the main point of contact. Cllr Jane Burton would also assist.

**14. To receive nominations for Trustee vacancy for North Nibley Village Hall**. Following the resignation of Cllr Stuart Hale from the Village Hall Trustees, the chair had asked for this item to be included on the Parish council agenda. Cllr Jane Burton had agreed to become a trustee and the clerk agreed to inform the Village Hall trustees accordingly.

**15.** **To receive update on broadband project.** Councillors acknowledged the monthly update report from BT but also expressed disappointment in the timescales and the perceived lack of activity in the area: **“**Just to provide the latest report from the field. The engineering work is looking to be completed by the end September. We have a notice in for Road Closure which will start on the 11th September and this should then lead to the completion of the fibre install and then we can commission the Cabinet. We’ll continue to push for improvements and to ensure that the cabinet is live for service as quickly as we can following the completion of the engineering works. If you have dates for Parish sessions later in the year I’ll be more than happy to come back, but in the meantime I’ll provide another view later in August”. The clerk had subsequently arranged for the BT manager to attend the October Parish Council meeting.

**16. To receive a report on July speed awareness training sessions and consider future schedules.** Cllr Dave Palmerreported on the two training sessions that had run successfully at the village hall and out in-situ in July. There were three trainees at each session. Six recruits in all had been signed off as trained speed watchers. Three people are required for each group, although two is also satisfactory. Four sites had been approved by the police trainer as safe: by the Cemetery, the bus stop, the layby down from the garage, and by the Jubilee tree. More people who wish to attend can attend a further session and the clerk undertook to liaise with the trainer about a future date. The first group had gone out on site the previous Monday and started to log speeds within ranges, for example, speeds of 0-10, 20-25. Data from these categories are added up at the end of the session. Volunteers can’t stop drivers, gesticulate, nor normally take registration numbers, although the latter can be taken in cases of exceptional driver behaviour. Police will analyse speed figures overall to decide on further action.

**17. To consider options for a lockable box at the village hall.** The clerk reported she had investigated storage options at the village hall with the management committee and received the offer to fit but not source a lockable cupboard no larger than a 400mm cube. This to be provided by the Parish council in the floor level cupboard below the work surface in the Meeting Room. However this would not be large enough to take the speed gun tripod which could be stored separately in the alcove next to the cupboard. Cllr Dave Palmer advised the cupboard would be large enough for the speed gun and charger as well as the council projector. The speed gun and projector required to be measured to then advise the hall committee what size of storage was needed. Cllr Ken Brown undertook to bring to a future council meeting the catalogues he had in order to be able to select the box to be installed. Larger items not suitable for village hall storage, he would be happy to store at the farm.

**18. To consider options for defibrillator annual servicing/health check.** The clerk reported on the options for either a health check or annual service for the defibrillator as recently received on request from the defib suppliers. The clerk agreed to check with the Ambulance Trust as to their recommended intervals for defibrillator servicing to determine whether this tallied with the manufacturers’/ suppliers recommendation.

**19. To receive information on local road closures.** The clerk itemised four recent road closure notifications which had also been uploaded to the council website. These were either for BT related works or for water pipe repairs.

**20. To consider options for winter road/salt stocks.** The clerk had received a written request for notification of the parish need for winter stocks of road salt/grit from Amey. Councillors agreed three specific local sites that required winter stocks and the clerk undertook to inform Amey by their deadline.

**21. To receive for information details of Correspondence received.** The clerk reported she had received a request for updated Registers of Interest/ Pecuniary Disposable Interests from the district authority Democratic Services department. The clerk advised that councillor Registers of Interest dated 2015 and 2016 were already uploaded to the council website. Additionally, a request for relevant updates had twice featured on council agendas in 2017 in the event of any changes. The clerk would liaise with Democratic Services as to whether these requests met their requirements, or if new forms were required for completion each year.

**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 4th September at 7.30 pm.**