**THE ORDINARY MEETING OF NORTH NIBLEY PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD ON MONDAY 4th SEPTEMBER 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 D Purnell.

**District Councillors:** Mr K Tucker, Mrs C Braun.

**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 L Smitherman, 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 Ordinary Council Meeting held on 7th August as a true record.** The Minutesof the August 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.**

* **Future payments from Breakheart monies.** The clerk reported that Lloyds Bank confirm they are able to supply counter cheques to draw on the council savings account holding the Breakheart monies. It would be required to give a branch adviser the name of the contractor and sums to be paid once invoices for cemetery work had been received. No charge will be made for counter cheques. (A cheque book unavailable for the savings account). The clerk agreed to check with the bank if two councillor signatories or referees were required to attend when counter cheques were drawn in future.
* **External Audit.** Grant Thornton had telephoned for confirmation that the clerk had amended the council asset register following the sale of the Breakheart land. She confirmed the asset register was updated earlier this year. The council has now passed the first stage of external audit and its audit file is referred onto the next stage for final checking.
* **Registers of Interest/DPIs.** Democratic Services Department at the District Authority confirmed that, as the request for update of Registers of Interest/Disposable Pecuniary Interests had been an agenda item on two occasions during 2017, (with no new updates received), the current registers of interests dating from 2015 and 2016 as uploaded to the council website, are regarded by them as current.
* **Swinhay Planning Appeal.** The clerk had sent (three) printed copies of the council’s appeal statement response to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol as requested by the Inspectorate. She also sent the same council statement as an email copy and received acknowledgement by email alongside confirmation of the Inspectorate’s 18th September site visit. A copy of the council’s response was also sent to the Appeal’s section at Planning at the District Authority.
* **Winter road stocks.** The clerk had ordered the stocks from Amey for the sites identified by councillors at the August council meeting. She had also requested lids be supplied for containers.
* **Pensions.** The clerk had requested a printed copy for records of the council’s submission to the Pensions Regulator of the information supplied on-line earlier this year to meet the new government requirements for Automatic Enrolment. The clerk was directed to their website but had not been able to download data to date. This may be due to a high usage of the site and she will pursue this further.
* **New trustee on the village hall management committee.** The clerk confirmed to the Chair of the management committee that Cllr Jane Burton will take on the trustee role.
* **Affordable housing.** The clerk understood that the new Affordable Housing Enabler was on annual leave in August but that contact can be made on her return to set up a meeting separate to the full council meeting.
* **Secure lockable box for council items at the village hall.** The clerk had some correspondence with the hall booking clerk/management committee reference to storage options and sent them a copy of the August minute for this item. She had subsequently measured the size of the council projector which is currently stored at the clerk’s home.
* **Procedure for reporting of abandoned vehicles.** Following a performance monitoring meeting of the Community Services and Licensing committee at the District Authority, the clerk had received details of the new procedure which was forwarded to councillors.

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 Applications:**

**Application Reference: S.17/1665/FUL**. Land Adjacent To Swinhay Small Holding, North Nibley. Application Type: Full Planning Permission. Description: Equestrian Menage.

The Parish Council objected on the following grounds: The Parish Council noted that the application states that the ménage is required for training of horses for activities such as eventing which are offsite events and are totally unrelated to the permitted use of the site which allows for horses ancillary to the agricultural use of the site. The proposal would therefore consolidate and intensify an unauthorised and unacceptable use and because of its links to offsite equestrian activities would result in increased traffic generation along the adjoining narrow lanes to the detriment of the safety, amenity and condition of these lanes and change their rural character.  
The proposal would also lead to an adverse impact on the visual amenity and character of the area by introduction of equestrian paraphernalia (a grounds for refusal in the Councils refusal notice dated 8th June 2017) and by the introduction of lighting which would give rise to light pollution which would be particularly intrusive in winter months. In the circumstances the Parish Council considers the application to be in conflict with a number of Local Plan policies and in particular ES3, ES7, and ES9 and requests that planning permission be refused. In addition the Parish Council considers that any other decision would be premature pending the appeal decision relating to the previous application S.17/0880/FUL which will be made in the near future and which will determine the planning merits of the use of the land including a ménage.

The council also discussed in relation to this application, and as a point of general procedure, the uploading of appeal documentation to the District Authority Planning website. It was noted in this case that no documents had been uploaded since the 8th of August. The clerk had received information concerning the Planning Inspectorate forwarding of the full set of third party responses to the District Planning authority and these were expected to be received by them in the next few days. On receipt the normal procedure is to upload the documents to the website. District councillor Ken Tucker undertook to further investigate the full procedure on behalf of the council.

**Application Reference: S.17/1705/LBC** Listed Building Consent 27.07.2017, Springfield House, 34 The Street, North Nibley. Redesign of external steps and courtyard.

The council wished to make no comment on this application.

**Application Number: S.17/1828/FUL.** Tidnams, Howley, Wotton-Under-Edge, Gloucestershire.

Application Type: Full Planning Permission. Description: Steel and concrete storage shed for small agricultural and garden machinery including tractor, ride on lawn mower, store for hay/feed for sheep and general garden tools.

The Parish Council objected on the following grounds: The Parish Council considers the proposed building to be excessively large for the purposes associated with a private dwelling house with small field attached. Due to its excessive size, construction materials and prominent position clearly visible from the adjoining highway and surrounding area, it would be detrimental to the visual character and amenities of the adjoining area situated within or close to the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where high standards of design are required. The proposal would therefore conflict with Local Plan policies ES7 and CP14 (criteria 5 and7) and the Parish Council therefore request that planning permission be refused.

**Application Number: S.17/1872/LBC.** Millmans Farm, Wotton Road, North Nibley, Wotton-Under-Edge. Application Type: Listed Building Consent. Description: Reduce number of and slightly alter roof light locations. Bicycle and Bin Storage Enclosures.

The council wished to make no comment on this application.

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

**Application Number: S.17/1266/HHOLD** - Proposed study extension. Cockrells Corner, Pitt Court, North Nibley. **Permission.**

**Application Number: S.17/1386/DISCON** - Discharge of condition 4 (boundary treatment and hard surfacing) from application S.16/0376/FUL. Iona, Pitt Court, North Nibley. **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 who especially reported the Stroud Subscription Rooms were keen to continue and some community groups had expressed an interest. However the rooms were also on the property market. District councillor Catherine Braun reported that the current District Authority Local Plan was under review especially as regards housing allocation under the Government’s new methodology for assessing numbers of new housing. This constituted a large document that the clerk could expect to receive in due course.
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, who especially noted the new contract for Highways was due a report to cabinet at end of the month. Overall this would likely mean more responsibility for the County Council directly and less by contractors. However, full details were not currently available. As regards the planning for the Wood Lane gate, Cllr Cordwell recommended contacting the Rights of Way Officer, John Lane. There was a possibility if councils paid half, a contribution might be forthcoming. As Wood Lane is on the Cotswold way, it was also recommended to get in touch with the Cotswold wardens.
3. **To receive and discuss Reports of Committees and Meetings** **attended by Parish Councillors and the Clerk.**

**Cllr Ken Brown** as Chair thanked Cllr Dave Purnell for his work dealing with the overgrown hedge in the cemetery, and Cllr D Palmer for his work to organising groups in clearing of the ragwort on The Knoll. Cllr Dave Palmer reported that two new people had been involved this time. As the work of the whole group much appreciated, he planned to write a thank you to named people in an article for On The Edge.

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, small meeting room hall hire for speed awareness training sessions in July:**

**£42.00**

**Hawkins contract work:**

Contract mowing cemetery x6 times from 1st June to 24th July, at £110.00 =£660 plus VAT:

**£792.00**

Contract mowing churchyard on 13th June 2017, £200. Plus VAT: **£240.00**

**Total to include VAT: £1,032.00**

**2/To consider quotes for scheduled work.**

Cut hedge by roadside to ground level and prune overhanging Holly tree. All wood and brash to be removed from site.  **£310.00**

The above quote was accepted by councillors. This compared favourably with a previous quote that had been received for the same work.

Councillors wished to extend the brief to include clearance of the hedge cuttings from the hedge on the right hand side of the cemetery and cutting the hedge at the lower end of the cemetery. The clerk agreed to secure quotes for these from the same contractor.

**3/ To consider options for update of council annual grant application process**. The clerk further thanked District Councillor Ken Tucker for his forwarding of questions used in four examples of application forms for grant funding. The clerk reported she had incorporated these ideas as appropriate and in reference to the minute from the July 2017 council meeting stated the council’s requirements for more information about organisations applying for grants. This was especially in relation to their financial situation. The clerk had absorbed all key suggestions into a new proforma for a grant application form and this proforma was agreed by councillors. The clerk undertook to upload the form to the council website and make grant applicants aware of the new form.

**4/** **To consider options for CILCA training.** The clerk had consulted the CILCA trainer on the costs involved for clerk training as the council had 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. The clerk was reassured that the £250 would not change during the same year for a trainee but fees would be raised only for new candidates. The clerk had already completed the mentoring aspect of the training, so no further costs would be involved there.

**5/** **Cllr K Brown presented an option for the lockable box in the meeting room of the village hall.** at £150.00 plus £30.00 including VAT to include delivery. The illustration of the lockable box showed a design at 450 cm depth, 730 cm height, and 800 cm wide. Cllr Dave Palmer confirmed the space reserved in the village hall would not be large enough for the tripod but would be suitable for both the projector and speed gun. Cllr D Palmer agreed to discuss the dimensions of space available with the chair of the village hall committee to determine if a larger space could be made available.

**12.To receive and approve Cemetery and Closed Churchyard Reports. The clerk informed councillors** that a cemetery inspection on the 26th August revealed three workmen on site, one dumper truck, one digger, and a good deal of work being undertaken at the end of the first week of work. This was work on both the memorial garden and paths projects. The new memorial wall to the right-hand side of the new part of the memorial garden (utilising existing stone on site) was partially built, whilst the (right) hand wall from the original memorial garden construction was partly demolished. The contractor was on site and agreed to supply the clerk with the re-stated method statements by email as previously minuted during council meetings and as requested by the clerk. Thank you to Cllr Dave Palmer who had removed the vases from the right hand shelf and placed them under the main shelf.

Councillors undertook a group site visit immediately before the council meeting to view the work being carried out. The work showed that the memorial garden part of the project as well as the paths part of the project are now running in conjunction at the same time. Edging work on the borders of paths was quite well advanced and also some resurfacing work on the paths themselves. The hedge bordering the cemetery to the far right hand side had been substantially trimmed and cuttings were awaiting removal.

The clerk had contacted Hawkins following the site visit on the 26th August to request a reminder of the date for the autumn trim around the memorial plaques and to let them know that other contractors were on site for several weeks. The Burial Clerk had also visited the site during the construction period.

Both the clerk and the Burial clerk had received correspondence and phone calls during the month concerning the Dugan memorial that had previously been approved by council some months ago. The erection of this is now delayed due to a breakdown of the client’s agreement with the original company supplying the memorial. The Burial Clerk had received an enquiry from a family undertaking what was believed to be family history. Whilst she had identified the site of the family burial/interment, the exact site was difficult to determine due to weather wear and tear on memorial stones in that part of the cemetery. Additionally the family enquiring had not turned up to date at the appointment as planned to discuss this.

As regards the erection of memorials on graves before the twelve month interval from the date of interment had been reached, the clerk had sent a letter to Funeral Directors (report aside) to remind them of the cemetery regulations. No response had been received to date. Councillors agreed that funeral directors must have been previously aware of these regulations. Whilst the twelve month interval from the date of internment is a standard item in the cemetery regulations, Cllr J Burton noted that families may not fully understand the reasons for the twelve month interval.

**Churchyard**

An inspection by the clerk on the 26th of August revealed the church wall to continue in a reasonable condition. However, some additional areas of ivy growth had grown down over the wall from the churchyard above in certain sections. Thank you to Cllr Dave Palmer who had cut back ivy and brambles from the wall following this inspection. Councillors noted that the ivy growing up the pole in the property immediately adjacent to the churchyard was a cause for concern. Similarly a significant crack had appeared in the pole. Clls Dave Purnell and Dave Palmer agreed to discuss these issues with the householder.

**13. To consider requirements for the councillor vacancy**. Cllr Jane Burton acknowledged the NALC legal briefing received from the clerk on co-option requirements, including the requirement for public information. The briefing included a useful listing of example essential competencies and desirable ones for a new councillor. An advertisement was consequently envisaged for OTE, the council website and parish noticeboards. It was important to encourage other people to become involved as representative of all ages and skills. Her review of other advertisements advised the advert needed to say that there were eleven meetings in a year the new councillor would be expected to attend. County Cllr John Cordwell advised that it was important to contact Democratic Services at Stroud District Council before the advert was placed. This was because it may be required to go through an election procedure if ten parish signatories were received to trigger an election. If less signatories were received, the advertisement for the co-option procedure could be placed. Cllr Jane Burton agreed to email Democratic Services the following day with formal notification of the councillor vacancy.

**14. To consider options for the gate at Wood Lane**. Immediately prior to the council meeting, councillors had attended a site meeting at Wood Lane to assess the options for the gate as well as the optimum position for it to be installed. It was envisaged to have two gates, one of ten feet and one with a gap of five feet, both hinged, together with a central post in the middle section inside its own sleeve. A horse gate was envisaged for the left hand side of the post and a hunting gate (with apse) for the right hand side. The ideal location was a short distance up on the path side (other than the road side) and in front of the existing posts towards the end of the lane nearest the main road. As regards works a JCB would be needed to help create the site on the left hand side of the bank. Cllr Dave Palmer envisaged there may be a discount on the costs of the gates and undertook to discuss these options with John Lane, the Rights of Way officer, alongside the Planning issues related to the works proposed.

**15. To receive update on hedges, drains and tree work.** The clerk informed councillors that the main action from the August council meeting on this item had been carried through with a clerk’s draft of a prospective letter to householders. This had been circulated to councillors during the last month. An amendment made by the chair had stressed the importance of safety issues in ensuring hedges were cut to keep roads and pathways clear. Councillors agreed the proforma letter to be sent to householders and identified some specific householders that would be in receipt of the letter from the clerk on behalf of the council. Cllr Dave Palmer agreed to write an article on householder responsibility for hedge maintenance and include this as an item in his on-going series for On The Edge.

As regards Highways responsibility for hedge maintenance Cllr Ken Brown reported that he had been in touch with Highways to get roadside hedges cut as soon as possible. Certain junctions were deemed dangerous to traffic and pedestrians as previously identified.

**16. To receive a monthly update on broadband project.** The clerk informed councillors she had not received the expected monthly report from BT on project progress. However, the BT manager previously attending a council meeting earlier in the year, had agreed he would attend the October council meeting to report directly on project development. Councillors noted increasing difficulties with securing local broadband speeds, and in some cases even current speeds available had declined. Councillors noted the imminent BT works related road closure from the 11th to the 22nd of September, but also stated their disappointment in the slowness to anticipate aspects of the broadband project, that had they been so planned, could have brought faster speeds to the parish much sooner.

**17. To consider options for defibrillator annual servicing/health check.** The clerk confirmed that the Ambulance Trust had recommended an annual service of the village hall defibrillator. This was an expert independent view that supported the advice previously put forward by the device suppliers in correspondence with the clerk. Councillors agreed that the annual service would be arranged by the clerk, who also stated that the Ambulance Trust had supplied a listing of defib device items to be checked on a monthly basis. Councillors agreed with Cllr Jane Burton that the regular monthly check could be carried out before each council meeting.

**18. To receive for information details of Correspondence received.** The clerk reported she had received a warning from another clerk at a parish within the Cotswolds of a spate of quod bike thefts in rural areas. This appeared to be a series of well organised incidents, and anyone suspecting theft was advised to contact the police to report the incident.

**19. Additional items and forward planning.** The clerk informed councillors that a separate council finance meeting was due in early November as part of the budget planning and precept setting process. This meeting was agreed by councillors for Monday 13th November at 7.00 pm at Waterley Farm. The clerk also informed councillors that, whilst the 2017 Village Clean Up Day was a very useful event, it was judged last time to be held too late in the growing season for the optimum cleaning up possible. Councillors agreed to bring the date forward for the Village Clean Up Day to Saturday 17th of March 2018, (from the 1st April 2017). The clerk also informed councillors that she and the chair had had some preliminary discussion concerning the annual audit procedure for the next financial year. These discussions would continue during the autumn and ahead of the November finance meeting. Proposals as appropriate would then become a council agenda item in due course.

**There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55 pm.**

**The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 2nd October at 7.30 pm.**