**THE ORDINARY MEETING OF NORTH NIBLEY PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD ON MONDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2017, IN THE VILLAGE HALL, NORTH NIBLEY, AT 7.30 PM.**

**Present:** Mr K Brown, (Chair) Mrs J Burton, Mr D Palmer, Mr D Purnell, L Smitherman.

**District Councillors:** 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 K Larkin, District Cllr K Tucker, Matt Lloyd (BT)
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 4th September as a true record.** The Minutesof the September 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.**

* **Access to funds from Breakheart receipts.** The clerk had requested confirmation from Lloyds Bank in Dursley the bank can supply counter cheques to draw on the savings account holding Breakheart monies. She received a different response from that given by the Stroud branch of Lloyds earlier in the month. Counter cheques are not now available on a savings account without charge, and it is recommended two signatories visit the local branch to arrange transfer of funds to the Treasurer’s account. This is at no cost and would cover the invoices due this autumn for the cemetery work. The clerk had requested from the contractor the expected date for the issue of these invoices.
* **Precept.** The clerk had received confirmation from the District authority the second part of the annual precept for this financial year was paid to the Treasurer’s account on the 28th September.
* **Swinhay Planning Appeal.** The clerk had received notification from the Planning Inspectorate of the September date for the local site visit. However this included confirmation that other representatives would not be permitted to attend as this was an access required site visit only.
* **Planning consultation.** The clerk had received notice of the new Stroud District Local Plan consultation procedures as previously indicated by District Cllr Catherine Braun. The clerk has listed this invitation to consultation as an item for the November Parish council agenda.
* **New grant application form for 2018.** The clerk had uploaded the new form to the council website and also sent a copy directly to the Citizens Advice Bureau who had recently made an enquiry. The CAB have indicated their intention to apply by the deadline of the end of January 2018.
* **Overgrown hedges.** The clerk had drafted a letter to householders modelled on the successful letter sent to local estate residents last year. She posted one of this new version and liaised with the chairman as regards the delivery of others to recipients identified. The letter requested householders cut back hedges within one month of the date of the letter. The clerk had received no enquiries from letter recipients to date.
* **Pensions.** The clerk wrote to request a printed copy for council records of the full submission to the Pensions Regulator. This is a statement of the information supplied on-line earlier this year to meet the new government requirements for Automatic Enrolment. It had proved not possible to download a full copy of the statement from the on-line account.
* **Speed awareness.** Cllr Dave Palmer had informed the clerk the speed gun in the standard pack did not fit the tripod supplied. However he had ordered an adaptor plate and awaits arrival. As the plate had not yet arrived the clerk undertook to ring up to pursue a due delivery date.
* **Defibrillator at village hall.** The clerk was requested to supply the full technical specification for the defib device before the full service could take place and she awaits notification of the engineer’s available dates.
* **E.news for Stinchcombe Parish Council**. District Cllr C Braun had forwarded the link to the latest copy of Stinchcombe e-news and the clerk had subsequently joined the list of subscribers.
* **Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA).** The clerk had registered on-line as a new candidate and had received registration confirmation to include login details.

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:**

There were no planning applications.

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

**Application Number S.17/1665/FUL.** Land Adjacent to Swinhay Small Holding, North Nibley, Equestrian Ménage. **Permission.**

Councillors expressed concern in terms of planning processes that the planning decision was made in advance of an appeal decision which was still outstanding for a related planning application. Councillors undertook to await the appeal decision before deciding what avenues were open, but especially if the Appeal was agreed, the council would consider a written response.

**Application Number S.17/1705/LBC.** Springfield House, 34 The Street, North Nibley. Redesign of external steps and courtyard. **Consent.**

**Application Number. S.17/1775/MINAM**. Millmans Farm, Wotton Road, North Nibley. Minor amendment to permissions, S.16/2227/FUL (reduce number of and reposition roof lights, bike and bin stores). **Approval.**

**Application Number**. **S.17/1450/COU.** Church Farm, Frog Lane, North Nibley. Barn 1, conversion of agricultural building to holiday let. **Permission.**

Councillors noted that conditions had been applied to ensure the conversion was used solely for holiday accommodationpurposes.

**Application Number. S.17/1703/MINAM.** Iona, Pitt Court, North Nibley. Minor amendment in S.16/0376/FUL to include solar PV array. **Approval.**

1. **To receive a written District Council Report. The Council received a** written report from District Councillor K Tucker on behalf of the ward’s District Councillors. The chairman thanked Councillor Tucker for his report (noting his apologies for this meeting).
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 drew attention to the recent referral of county council motions to committees.
3. **To receive and discuss Reports of Committees and Meetings** **attended by Parish Councillors and the Clerk.**

There were no items to report.

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:

**Water Plus water supply to cemetery, 27th February to 28th August 2017.**

**£28.48**

**2/To consider quotes for scheduled work.** The council received and approved the payment to the Society of Local Council Clerks for the (CILCA) Clerk’s Certificate in Local Council Administration registration:

**£250.00**

**3/ Council balances.** The council noted the September statement of council balances prepared by the clerk in advance of the November finance meeting. The clerk informed councillors these statements were received before the payment of the second precept instalment at the end of September.

4/**Report on external audit financial year 2016/17.** The clerk informed councillors that Grant Thornton had approved the council accounts for 2016/17 financial year on the 15th September 2017 and she had received the signed documentation by post on the 21st September. The external auditors had previously raised by telephone two queries concerning the sale of the Breakheart land. They requested confirmation overall asset values had been adjusted following the sale as well as the asset register amended accordingly. They were satisfied with the replies received from the clerk.

The final external audit written report had raised an issue about the legal exercise of public rights ensuring that this is 30 days. However, as this was raised on the 3rd July 2017 and ended on the 2nd August 2017 the period covered 30 days. Additionally, the information required for the exercise of public rights remains on the council website for on-going public reference and transparency.

The clerk informed councillors Grant Thornton have reached the end of their five year contract with all councils for external audit purposes. For 2017/18 new auditors have been appointed and details were awaited. However, the clerk understood from GAPTC that there will likely be an increased requirement in future for upload of key documents to council websites for public scrutiny.

**5/To consider clerk’s internal audit proposals for financial year 2017/18.** The clerk informed councillors last year’s internal audit was carried out by a GAPTC appointed auditor to exacting standards and advised this coming year will require an approach managed by the Parish Council and Clerk. The Clerk put forward recommendations for the management of the next financial year’s internal audit which councillors agreed the Chairman and Clerk will progress in advance of the November finance meeting and then report to the meeting.

**6/** **Clerks quarterly wages, broadband, expenses, mileage.** The council approved the payment of the Quarter 2 items for the clerk.

**12. To receive and approve Cemetery and Closed Churchyard Reports.** The clerk informed councillors a cemetery inspection on the 28th of September showed considerable progress made with building the new memorial garden wall to an extended symmetrical shape with the new right arm wall mirroring the shape of the older left. Earth works disturbed had been distributed over grass on the extended field area to the rear and some grass and weed seeding had now taken place in this area. Edging work on the borders of paths was underway and also some resurfacing work on the paths themselves. Under discussion is the possibility of lowering the existing shelf on the memorial garden wall to allow more space above for new memorial plaques to be positioned on the wall itself.

The clerk wrote to the contractor on the 22nd September to request his works update for the Parish Council meeting. She had also requested an indication of when invoices are to be sent as this will require the availability of funds from the Breakheart land sale. Cllr D Purnell reported the contractor was due to have completed work on the memorial garden the previous week but certain items needed completion to include repainting the wall.

In mid-September the clerk received a letter from Summers Memorials confirming the cancellation of the Dugan memorial design and enclosing the cheque to the Parish Council for £250 dated 30th June 2017. The clerk had now determined Summers Memorials have reimbursed the client for her monies for the memorial whose final design she had not approved. The cheque received from them is the non-parish fee for erection of a memorial. This sum was originally collected from the client by Summers in their overall fee and is now passed to the Parish Council so that the client will be ready for the erection of another memorial by another company if she so requests in future.

The contractor selected had previously allocated a day in early October for hedge cutting work on the cemetery roadside.This will also allow for the erection of the new request parking sign in due course**.** He was also able to remove the hedge trimmings from the far right hand side as a concession with no extra fee on the same day. The clerk had requested and awaited to hear if he will charge for the lower right hand side hedge cutting and removal of nettles/overgrowth towards the lower end of the cemetery. Councillors were unsure as to whether the contractor would be available for work on the date previously agreed due to leave commitments.

The clerk noted that graves especially nearer the roadside appear well visited with many flowers looking well cared for. She had been informed by the chair that a relative is considering removing the stone edging around her predecessor’s grave to allow for ease of grass cutting in future.

As regards the continuing role of the Burial Clerk, following discussions with Cllr D Purnell, it was agreed that Cllr D Palmer’s wife would give active support to the role and the two would work together. Councillors would monitor the situation and the Chairman and councillors thanked Mrs Palmer for offering to assist.

**Churchyard**

A clerk’s inspection on the 28th of September revealed the church wall to continue in a reasonable condition. Main external wall areas are clean and largely clear of ivy. However, the internal wall with the immediate neighbour now has ivy and some other growth on the top and cemetery sides of the wall. The clerk received in the meeting a written report via the chair from the Secretary of the Parochial Church Council. This is a quinquennial inspection report on the condition of churchyard walls, grounds, grave markers, trees and tombstones. The clerk undertook to scan the ten page report to include maps to send to councillors. The chair informed councillors the PCC hoped the Parish Council would take on the management of the holm oak tree in the churchyard, the price from the original contractor having not been agreed as acceptable by them. Cllr D Palmer had a contact that he could approach for a quote for this work and Cllr L Smitherman also had a contact that the Chair agreed to speak to.

**13/ To consider issues relating to ivy growth by the closed churchyard.** The clerk had received correspondence from a resident neighbouring the churchyard wall detailing his concern about ivy and other shrubs growing up to the property roof, through the wall, and onto the telegraph pole. Councillors acknowledged receipt of this correspondence. However, Cllr D Purnell stated after an inspection the wall was impacted by soil behind rather than by the growth of shrubs and small trees. Councillors agreed that professional advice was first required and work needed maybe beyond the scope of a local volunteer group. Previous advice had said it was inappropriate to take ivy out of the walls as this would risk weakening the walls. A further systemic approach was needed to include the Japanese knot weed. The clerk undertook to write to the neighbour to say the previous remedial work undertaken did not constitute a full solution and the council would seek further professional advice.

**14/To consider requirements for councillor vacancy.** The clerk had liaised with Stroud District Council Elections as to the procedure required for an election and adopted their proforma for a public notice to this effect. This was included on the council website as well as a printed notice on each parish noticeboard. Cllr J Burton reported to the meeting, that as there had been no signatories to trigger an election procedure, the co-option procedure could go ahead. It was important to word the advert carefully and to appeal to all age groups with the right skills, but also good to attract a representative of the local school community and also younger applicants. Cllr L Smitherman advised the parish council needed to engage with the village as a whole, noting the annual parish meeting earlier in the year had a few, other than annual grant recipients, in attendance. It was important for parishioners to think of parish councillors as the first port of call, and whilst the council had a great skill base, there was a need to equally engage younger residents in the village. As the first stage of the co-option procedures, Cllr J Burton undertook to draft the advert within the next seven days and thereafter councillors could consider the best routes to make residents aware of the vacancy. Options included a notice through letter boxes and doors and also the use of social media and informal talks with local groups.

**15/To consider issues relating to rural housing.** The clerk reported she had received recent correspondence from the new Affordable Housing Enabler’s manager to explain the affordable housing project had now been passed to him. This was because, in his post as Rural Housing Enabler, he worked across Gloucestershire to identify communities housing needs and support the community take appropriate action. Whilst he had currently proposed a meeting in October with councillors, they requested the clerk respond by email to request he picks up from where the project was last left and bring forward the file built up by the previous Affordable Housing Enabler.

**16/To receive an update on the Wood Lane gate.** Cllr D Palmerinformed councillors of his meeting with the Amey representative to whom he had been referred by the Rights of Way Officer to discuss the council’s (horse) gate proposal. Whilst the initial response was less positive than hoped due to the Highway status of the route, and stronger posts concreted into the ground were suggested as an option, councillors agreed it was key to identify the legal side. Cllr D Palmer undertook to draft a letter to the Rights of Way Officer to explain the council’s intention to install a horsegate.

**17/To receive monthly** **update on broadband project.** The clerk informed councillors the BT manager had sent his apologies for the current meeting but had submitted a report in lieu on the same day which had been circulated to councillors. This report summarised the final cabling work before the fibre could be blown to the cabinet. Councillors concluded the report was disappointing overall as it indicated a lack of progress to previously stated timescales. As the project was now eighteen months beyond the date of the public meeting, and six months beyond the previously promised deadline of the spring of 2017, the clerk was requested to write in response with these points, and send a copy to the MP for the Cotswolds, Clifton Brown.

**18/To receive diary dates for the Parish Council meetings for 2018**. Councillors noted from the clerk the dates listing for Parish Council meetings from January to December 2018. The clerk confirmed to the chair that these dates and times had been agreed with the village hall bookings clerk. She also highlighted, that due to the May Day holiday for 2018 falling on the 7th May (Bank Holiday), the May meeting had been booked for the following Monday, 14th May.

**19/ To receive for information details of Correspondence received.** The clerk informed councillors she had received a copy of a local resident’s letter by email concerning overhanging trees at Forthay which had not been actioned as urgent by Highways. On request from the chair the clerk had highlighted to Highways on behalf of the Parish Council this action was urgent. Correspondence had also been received from the county council concerning the requirement for many more foster carers in Gloucestershire. Councillors agreed to display the two posters supplied to draw local attention to the need for carers to come forward. The clerk had also received recent correspondence from District Cllr K Tucker with respect to the complex funding, which was also now reduced, for Road Safety Training. County Councillor John Cordwell informed councillors the county council had now stepped in with funding to ensure training provision and he requested that this recent correspondence be copied to him by the clerk.

**There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20 pm.**

**The next Meeting of the Parish Council will be held in the Village Hall on Monday 6th November 2017.**