

REPORTS TO ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISH COUNCIL: MAY 2016

Report on County Council Matters to North Nibley Parish Council

16th May 2016

John Cordwell

County Council

The annual meeting of the County Council took place last Wednesday. The vacancy on the council was held by the Liberal Democrats on 5th May. The council now has a Lib Dem chair and a Conservative vice-chair.

Three motions were considered and agreed at the meeting. The first called upon the Secretary of State for Education to completely abandon aspirations to convert all schools to academies and to remove parent governors from their governing bodies.

The second called upon the relevant cabinet member to explain the current serious delays in issuing death certificates across the county, well beyond the five-day statutory period, and how the administration intended to improve the quality of the service.

The third sets up a short duration task group to help shape the council's consultation policies and practices with the intention of increasing the level of response.

During members' questions I asked what mechanisms are in place to ensure that if a covenant with the county council is breached this comes to the attention of the council and the covenant is enforced or compensation sought. This followed an incident in Wotton when a covenant was overlooked. Since historically these have all been held on paper it mostly relies on the prospective purchaser's solicitor discovering the covenant. I was informed there are probably hundreds of covenants with the county council currently in existence.

Another member referred to a Parliamentary Select Committee finding that councils were failing to support looked-after children with mental health problems and asked for evidence on how long looked-after children in Gloucestershire are waiting for necessary treatment for mental health problems. The surprising answer from the cabinet member was that it was not known, despite councillors having corporate parenting responsibility for children in care.

County Planning Committee

At the committee's first meeting of this financial year last Thursday I was elected chair. I previously held this position in the committee responsible for planning from 1985 to 1992.

Locally funded Highways schemes

I have recently sent details to your clerk of the Highways Local and Lengthsman schemes for this year. I need suggestions before the end of May! I am meeting Andrew Middlecote next week.

Children's Activity Fund

This annual fund allocates £5k to each County Councillor for their divisions.

Criteria for the scheme have changed for 2016/17 and are available on the County Council website at <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/childrensactivityfund> Any proposal should be discussed with me and then submitted to me electronically to pass on to the scheme administrators.

Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Community Events

These events advise on how residents can keep safe and well in their homes. The town centre event planned for Wotton has now been fixed for Saturday 27th August between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

John Cordwell

Stroud District Council Wotton under Edge Ward.

(Wotton under Edge, North Nibley and Stinchcombe)

Stroud District Councillor Report for May 2016.

Due to the recent elections, there has been little happening in the last month to report from either the Full Council or Committees at Stroud District Council.

Police and Crime Commissioner, District and Town and Parish Council elections were held on 5th May.

Due to boundary changes, for 2016 the size of the SDC Wotton under Edge Ward was increased to include the Parish of Stinchcombe, which has a population of 390 residents. The Ward now has approx. 2770 properties and 5330 residents.

The results of the District Council election were as follows:

Ken Tucker	Liberal Democrat Party	1622	elected
Catherine Braun	Green Party	830	elected
George Burcher	Liberal Democrat Party	804	elected
Lesley Reeves	Conservative Party	754	
Adrian Walker-Smith	Liberal Democrat Party	745	

Alex Wilkinson	Independent	722
Henry Binns	Conservative Party	480
Alex Wheeler	Conservative Party	419
Henry Hinder	UKIP	401

Interim Group Leaders have been meeting since the elections to form an administration. It has been agreed that the Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat Councillors will again form a 'rainbow coalition' or 'Cooperative Alliance' and will hold the balance of power by 28 seats to the Conservative's 23.

Further negotiations are currently underway to allocate members on to the 6 main committees, ie Audit and Standards, Environment, Housing, Development Control (Planning), Community Services & Licencing and Strategy and Resources and also the sub-Groups and advisory panels etc. It is expected that Cllr Tucker will take a seat on both the Strategy & Resources and Environment Committees and Cllr Butcher Community Services and Licencing. Cllr Braun has yet to be allocated.

The Group Leaders and Deputy Leaders are shown below:

Group Leaders	Party	Deputy Leaders	Sub total
Cllr Keith Pearson	Conservative	?	22
Cllt Steve Lydon	Labour	Cllr Doina Cornell	18
Cllr Martin Whiteside	Green	Cllr John Marjoram	8
Cllr Ken Tucker	Liberal Democrats	Cllr George Butcher	2
Cllr Nigel Studdert-Kennedy	Conservative -No Group	-	1
		TOTAL>	51

Election of the Council Leader and Chair and Deputy Chair will be agreed at the Council AGM, which will take place on 19th May at 1900 at Ebley Mill. Ratification of the Group seat allocation proposals will also take place then.

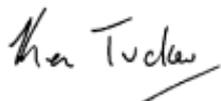
- The Garden Waste collection service has still not had the predicted uptake. SDC are therefore continuing their promotion drive to get more residents to subscribe to it. Problems are occurring (mainly in Stroud and Wotton due to the terrain) where residents are not able to store an extra bin or unable to get it down to the kerb side for collection. Small bags, similar to those used for recycling, have not yet been made available. Complaints are being past to the appropriate Council officers. Otherwise, after some initial problems, regular collections are now being made. The proposed recycling sorting centre at Gossington on the A38, to be run by Ubico, a SDC owned

company, is well under construction. I understand all Councillors will be invited to see the facility once completed.

- The Gloucestershire devolution application to Government has had a significant set-back, when Cotswold District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council stated they wanted to form a new joint administration. This has serious potential implications for the County of Gloucestershire, which have been variously reported recently. The devolution team continue to be in conversation with the Government, but timescales are, as yet, unknown
- Sheltered accommodation in Dryleaze Court, Wotton, built in 1969 and no longer 'fit for purpose', is to be demolished to make way for another development, which has yet to be decided, but it is unlikely to be specifically for the aged, and the site could be disposed of altogether. Your local Councillors got agreement from SDC that the remaining 9 residents would only leave when suitable accommodation has been found for all of them (and that they would also receive some compensation for the inconvenience of moving and significant help when packing belongings etc). This will ensure a small degree of social and protective security for those still there, some of whom are 90+. The remaining flats and bungalows in the Dryleaze Court complex may be given washing machines to replace the existing communal facilities or otherwise forced to share those available at the adjacent Dryleaze House. The latter is being strongly resisted by those living in the 'House'!
- Potholes continue to be a huge problem in our area, some which are 'repaired', then need attention again within a few weeks. Residents are being encouraged to report potholes via the GCC website. <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/reportit>

Local concerns:

Potholes	(WuE, NN and S)
Vehicle speeding	(WuE, NN and S)
Predatory building developments	(WuE)
Poor broadband & mobile signal	(NN)



Liberal Democrat District Councillor for Wotton Ward (Wotton under Edge, North Nibley & Stinchcombe). 13 May 2016