

BARROW GURNEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall, Barrow Gurney
on Monday, 8 May 2017.

Present: Claire Arbery, Richard and Marion Burlinson, Geoff Coombs, Jason Cox, Charles Critchett, James Durie, Steve Fensome, Eric Gates (Chairman), Steve King, Alexander Learmonth, Rob McKenzie, Tim and Deb Nicholson, Rick Radice, Margaret Rees, Dave and Rach Reynolds, Marie Riboulet, Andy Robbins, Annie Robinson, Nigel Sommerville, Nick and Jan Tyrrell and Joanna van Tonder (Parish Clerk)

Eric Gates welcomed all to the meeting.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Phil Carnell, Ginny Gibbs and Nick and Jan Kershaw.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting - held on 9 May 2016

The minutes of the last meeting having been circulated previously were taken as a true and accurate record.

3 Presentation of the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017

Residents were provided with a summary of the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017. The Clerk presented her Financial Report (copy attached).

4 Chairman's Report and Village News

Eric Gates presented a series of slides covering the following:

1. Walkways project: Thanks were offered firstly to Geoff Coombs who had been instrumental in ensuring that Bristol Airport's growth resulted in S106 monies that could be released upon completion of the SBLR. Project manager, Andy Robbins was thanked for working tirelessly to influence outcomes and ensure the project objectives were met. Eric confirmed that, apart from the redesigning of the A38 junction, these objectives had been achieved. Eric quipped that in excess of 1,600 e-mails had been exchanged over the past twelve months just in support of the Walkways project!
2. Outstanding items: These were:
 - the entrance to the village green,
 - signs and road markings at Cambridge Batch,
 - weep holes at Springhead,
 - road markings at the School Lane end of the chicane, and
 - signs at the two entrances to the village
3. Village Green: Eric outlined the work that had been completed to lay the hedge as well as what was still required to reinstate an entrance to the Green opposite the war memorial. The general consensus was that most residents liked the open vista across the Green. All the volunteers who had helped with regular tidy-ups throughout the year were thanked together with those who had taken the opportunity during the road closure to collect litter from along Barrow Street. It was agreed this had made a positive impact.
4. Barrow Hospital: At present, 17 properties within the Oatley Park development were occupied; the two applications for the remainder of the site having gone quiet. Steve King was credited with having done much to lobby NSC to make improvements to the drainage system in and around Hospital Road following a number of incidents of severe flooding. This seemed to now be under control. The use of the undeveloped sections of the site as a waste dump was mentioned.
5. Airport: Eric advised of planning applications to extend the existing car parking facilities. The Airport was in the process of updating their master plan and was looking beyond the current 10mppa capacity (2017 passenger numbers expected to reach 8mppa).

Bristol Airport and NSC would be commissioning a transport study looking at a range of transport modes including A38 corridor improvements.

6. Broadband: The possibility of Hospital Cottages making use of cabling to be provided to Oatley Park residences was explained. Connecting Devon & Somerset (CD&S) was in the process of finalising a contract with a supplier who might be able to provide fibre throughout the parish at an estimated cost of £200 per household. There was also a thought that BT could bring fibre to the existing cabinets if they were successful in sourcing an additional £100,000 in funding. The 4G mobile phone network was another possible alternative.
7. Footpaths: Parishioners were updated on works to the footpath network that had been undertaken during the year, specifically the upgrading of the paths from Upper Mill to both Redwood Farm and Wild Country Lane. The Parish Council and NSC had contributed the funds for 10 new pedestrian gates and one kissing gate with labour kindly supplied by volunteers of the Woodspring Ramblers Association.
8. Other village matters:
 - *Drains* – the Parish Council has continued to apply pressure on NSC to prioritise problem drains. Eric asked residents to join the PC in reporting any highways or drainage defects through "Council Connect" as these additional reports are helpful in securing a resolution.
 - *A38 dropped crossing kerb* – Eric reported that this crossing opposite the Fox & Goose pub on the A38 had been completed during the previous year with funds secured from Bristol Airport Community Fund.
 - *Wild Country Lane* – weight and width restrictions were to be introduced in the near future on the stretch down to Barrow Street.
 - *Ashton Vale* – despite strong objections by Dr Liam Fox to development in this area, there appeared to be growing support for a Green Belt review which might permit a housing plan for Ashton Vale.
 - *Conservation Area* – this designation would be progressing now that the Walkways project had been completed.
 - *Phone Box* – Eric extended an invitation for suggestions on possible uses for the phone box located outside the old Post Office.
 - *Tree Wardens* – much had been done by the team to monitor developments at the Hospital site.
 - *Fly-tipping* – NSC's new waste contract was cited as a possible reason for an increase in fly-tipping as it was now much more difficult to dispose of waste legitimately.
9. Police report: PC Martin Faithfull's report was presented. Crime figures for the year April 2016 to March 2017 showed Barrow Gurney accounted for 1.3% of the total 974 incidents for the Redwood Beat. A breakdown of the 13 incidents was given with theft the largest category of crime (4). Two cases each of criminal damage, burglary from a dwelling and other crimes were reported and one each of theft from a motor vehicle, assault and drugs.

During the presentation, questions, concerns and suggestions were taken from residents.

1. Vehicles had been seen driving over the kerbs at Springhead Barn and outside the Thatched Cottages. Cameras that were meant to monitor traffic activity in these locations had been moved to monitor the School Lane chicane instead.

EG: To be added to the list of outstanding things for NSC / Skanska to do

2. Regarding the supply of broadband, was it known how many properties would need to sign up for the chosen contractor to consider the area as financially viable?

GC: Details of the contract had not yet been made public as CD&S were awaiting signing of the contracts that had been delayed due to the Somerset elections. It was expected that there would be a standard connection charge in the region of £200 regardless of numbers.

3. Concerns were raised regarding the safety of the play area as the bark had turned to mulch and the ground was particularly soft under the swings. Rob McKenzie confirmed that an annual playground inspection was conducted by registered inspectors and that the most recent report had passed all aspects of the equipment and floor covering. He also advised that rubber matting would cost in excess of £8,000.

4. Regarding the hedge around the village green, it was asked if the space would be made "child-safe" as it was the opinion of the speaker that the hedge was too low.

5. It was asked if it would be possible to mark the road at the village green entrance to alert drivers to the possibility of children crossing.

6. The speed of the traffic in the vicinity of the Mill as motorists were leaving the village was highlighted as a concern.

7. It was agreed that the "pass this side" sign located outside the Thatched Cottages was inappropriate for a rural setting.

EG: It was agreed the Parish Council would look to address items 3 to 7

8. The final comment was supported by a number of residents; it was their view the Walkways project had delivered a fantastic transformation of the village.

Eric went on to introduce the topic for discussion, being *Reviving the Community*.

5 General Discussion: Reviving the Barrow Gurney Community

A lively discussion took place with many ideas put forward for consideration, including:

- continued support for the pub, especially villagers' nights
- consider entering *Best kept Village* and/or other similar competitions
- look to improve the tourist aspect of the village with perhaps the provision of picnic tables and BBQ stands on the village green
- publish a pamphlet of local walks that could be made available in the phone box together with other information of historic interest
- install a Table Tennis table on the village green with bats and balls available from the pub
- the national *Great British Get-together* in June could be a good event to start off with
- occasional road closures to allow free play for children or community events
- hold a Sports Day if volunteers could be found to organise it
- provide "giant" games equipment for use on the village green, for example Giant Jenga
- invite the Farmer's Market to the village hall

Everyone was reminded that alcohol consumption was not permitted on the village green.

Steve King advised parishioners that the Hospital residents were holding a street party in July and suggested the rest of the village could be invited. He undertook to discuss it with the organisers of the event and revert back.

6 Public Comments

The following issues were raised by parishioners:

1. Work to build the footway across the bridge at the Reservoir Farm / War Memorial end of the village green had been undertaken with some care in order to avoid weakening an old and undocumented structure. Currently there is a 7.5T weight limit and it was suggested that NSC should be asked to consider a 3T weight limit.

AR: Undertook to do so

2. A number of tour buses and coaches have been seen passing through the village.

EG: Vehicles that are carrying passengers are exempt from the 7.5T weight limit that covers the section of Barrow Street through the village.

3. Upon completion of the Walkways works, none of the expected deterring signage at the A38 junction has been provided.

EG: NSC had exhausted the available budget and it had also been decided that little could realistically be done to effectively deter vehicles from turning left into Barrow Street.

The Parish Council were thanked for the good job it does and for the many hours put in by the Councillors.

The meeting closed at 8:05 pm.

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FINANCIAL REPORT – FYE 31/03/2017

- x **Income:** One grant received during FYE 31/03/2017
 - £8,000 – Stancombe Quarry Fund
 - To supplement funding of the Village Walkways project
 - Expenditure will only be incurred in FYE 31/03/2018 so this money has been transferred to “earmarked reserves”
- x **Expenditure:** Savings over budget have been made in the following areas:
 - Village Green – savings of just less than £950 over budget as a result of:
 - £250 underspend on grass cuts and £100 on weed spraying and strimming that were budgeted for but not completed due to unfavourable weather conditions
 - Unspent contingency of £300 not required
 - £300 underspend on remedial repairs to the village green and playground
 - Footpath maintenance – expenditure of £700 this year has gone on the reinstatement of the footpath routes between the Hospital site / Wild Country Lane and the village centre. £200 of remaining budget has been earmarked for use during FYE 31/03/2018 to make improvements to the footpath from School Lane towards Barrow Court.
 - Unspent village maintenance provision - £400 budgeted for but not required
 - £1,000 of savings have been transferred to “earmarked reserves” to cover anticipated expenditure on the Village Green boundary hedge.
- x **Cash assets:** Balances in the bank at the end of the financial year:
 - £11,207.51 (current account)
 - £10,006.12 (deposit account – interest rate 0.03%)
 - £7,500.00 has been transferred from the current to the interest earning deposit account during this current financial year.
- x **Budget 2017/18:**
 - Precept has been increased by 10%
 - However, the number of contributing households has increased so the net impact on the average, band D equivalent household is an increase of 89 pence for the year (which equates to an increase of 2.62%)
 - Overall budgeted expenditure is up 11.3% on last year's budget
 - Additional costs included in the budget for this year are for Noticeboards (£1,900) and Planters (£200)
- x **Financial Accounts:**
 - The annual internal audit was conducted in April and the PC's Annual Return will be submitted to the external auditor in the next few days following the Annual Parish Council meeting.
 - All financial statements including a list of expenditure over £100, the bank reconciliation and detailed accounts will be published on the PC's website by the 2nd of June.
 - Once the Annual Return is received back from the external auditors, this too will be published on the website