

Minutes of General meeting

Held on Monday 16 July 2018, 6:45 at Lower Slaughter Village Hall
Councillors present Cllrs Sinclair (Chairman), Chapman, Roche, Thomas
and 15 members of the public

180717/1 To approve Cllr Sinclair as interim Proper Officer (unpaid) Agreed

180717/2 Apologies None received

180717/3 Declarations of Interest: None declared

180717/4 Chairman's Opening Remarks:

Cllr Sinclair welcomed everybody and read a statement:
On behalf of my fellow councillors, Parishioners and I would like to take the opportunity to thank John Fennell for the great work and excellent leadership. I only hope I can do justice to his legacy.

I know John inherited a somewhat challenging council which under his leadership achieved many things in an effort to maintain our village as an enviable place to live in and visit. He ensured that the council adhered to the legislation maintaining up to date procedures achieving compliance with the requirement for transparency introduced by the government.

My fellow councillors and I all are committed to doing the right thing by the village and its residents. Maintaining the public areas as well as acting as a voice of the villagers. We are not the complaints department for the village and will always encourage villagers to where ever possible take action by themselves. If this does not work and is an issue that they feel strongly about then by all means either drop the proper officer a note or bring it up during the public comments section. We are duty bound to consider input and ideas from villagers – preferably of a positive nature.

We have a full agenda and I would like to get through as much as we can in the allotted time. By way of a reminder in the public section that is your opportunity to speak and in line with your councils standing orders you have a maximum of 3 minutes per person/subject. We will receive your comments and put them in the agenda for the next full meeting of the council if appropriate or ask you to make a request in writing. Other than that the public are in attendance to observe the councils' discussions and decisions.

180717/5 Minutes of previous meetings

Meeting of the 14 May 2018. Cllr Thomas mentioned that there are a number of inaccuracies. The corrections were agreed and amendments will be made following the meeting and then minutes to be signed by Cllr Thomas presiding.



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Meeting of the 22 June 2018 were approved as a true account and duly signed by the residing Chairman.

180717/6 Matters Arising from the Minutes

At our Extraordinary General Meeting on the 16th June a parishioner asked to read a statement under agenda item 3 public section of our meeting under the heading Resignation of the Parish Clerk and subsequently left us a copy to study. A copy of that statement will be included with the minutes of today's meeting. A copy of the statement can be seen in appendix A

In return I would like to read out the following response on behalf of the council.

I would like to thank Ms Bennet for attending our last meeting and for delivering the statement. We are keen for input from our parishioners.

My fellow councillors and I agree that the majority of the comments made were inaccurate and, in some cases, misleading. As a Council we understand and are well aware of our various obligations.

The statement claims to be from a number of parishioners however the only name mentioned is Elizabeth Bennett. Following separate conversations that councillors have had with parishioners and separate unsolicited correspondence from parishioners stating their support for the council we do not consider that the statement is representative. Indeed we understand that parishioners were asked to sign a letter but declined. Never the less we would like to address some of the points raised.

It is stated that over recent years, procedures have not always been followed and gives as an example the Standing Orders incorrectly suggesting there have been none in place prior to the recent clerks' employment. This is not true. There have always been Standing Orders in place during ex Cllr Fennels Chairmanship. Recently we carried out one of our regular reviews of the standing orders and modified them to reflect a new model published by GAPTC.

The statement mentions there was disappointment that the chairman had declined an offer to meet with villagers on the matter surrounding the departure of the Parish Clerk. We addressed this in our EGM 22 June and you can see our response in minute 180622/5 To provide an update following the resignation of the Clerk in which we explained that matters between an



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employer and an employee are confidential. We expect that as a professional our former Clerk will also respect the confidentiality regarding her employment and as governed in our Standing Orders.

I would also like to put on record that in fact we did offer to meet with the Clerk to try to resolve issues from both parties but the clerk took the decision to resign.

To answer the three specific questions raised:

- 1) *Did the Clerk receive regular recorded, monitoring sessions with a councillor concerning performance?* This was part of her contract
- 2) *Did the Parish Council have any form of grievance and complaints procedures in place as Employment law requires.* Yes – standing order 19
- 3) We would like to understand why the audited accounts were delayed this year and why an extension was sought. We complied with all timescales agreed with our External Auditor and are fully compliant with all statutory obligations in this respect. In fact our internal auditor commented that ‘the accounts are in very good order’

Finally, the statement thanks the council for its voluntary efforts but incorrectly attributes ‘progress made in the last three months’ exclusively to the actions of the clerk. I would like to remind all that much of this “impressive progress” was already either in place or underway prior to the clerk appointment. Compliance with announcing meetings and recording minutes etc had all been in place for the duration of the council. Most recently, in compliance with the transparency legislation the web site etc was established and was already up and running.

To conclude this matter please rest assured that the council are using our best endeavours to discharge our responsibilities to the parishioners in a professional manner to ensure that the interests of the Village are always best served. We will continue to provide such a service to the lower Slaughter community and would take the opportunity to encourage parishioners to bring forward positive suggestions for improvements in the village that might assist in this endeavour.

The Council would like to think that we are a friendly and approachable bunch of individuals and understand that some parishioners may, from time to time, have some concerns. I think you will agree that the above could have been handled in a brief informal chat. If you truly value the work we all do

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voluntarily you would also agree that having to address these issues formally as part of our meeting is unnecessarily time consuming and frustrates your Council progressing its work.

Whilst we never make decisions outside of these meetings my colleagues and I would be happy to chat with anyone who has any concerns regarding the council and or ideas or issues in and around our village if it is appropriate.

180717/7 To receive comments from the public

a) Cllr Sinclair opened this section of the meeting by reiterating that the council allow 15 minutes, 3 minutes per person per subject and that we may decide to defer or ask for the point to be put in writing.
In this instance all points were answered at this meeting.

b) Mr Battersby expressed his frustration at lack of visibility from the council and effectively hiding behind a Clerk. The Chairman decided to respond by explaining that this is one of the roles of the Clerk and besides, the contact details for each of the councillors has been in all copies of the LSVN up to the appointment of the clerk. Contact details are also up to date in all relevant places ie CDC, Gloucester Council, GAPTc etc. We more than cover our statutory responsibility. Lower Slaughter is a small village and we see each other around so we could hardly be accused of hiding. When asked what more we could do his suggestion was to display our contact details publicly. This is not a requirement, and neither is it something that should be expected of councillors. The other members of the public and council agreed.

c) Mr Edwin had a number of points.

- He asked the council to make available the budget for the Clerk which we agreed to do.
- Would it be possible to arrange to have hard core or similar to fill pot holes in the unofficial lay-by. The council agreed to look into this. *Chairman added after the meeting-* -The pot holes have been filled
- Bus Shelter is in a poor state Mr Edwin suggested as this is no longer cleaned by volunteers and suggested he would get a quote for cleaning. The Council agreed to consider a quotation.
- Mr Edwin expressed concern regarding the pot holes in the bus stop pull in on the Fosse Way and generally with the poor maintenance of the signs around the village. The council agreed to put this on our list of works.
- Wanted to know where he could find copies of our procedures and was directed to the web site. The council also agreed that they would be happy to make available hard copies to parishioners that do not have access to the internet if requested. Colin also enquired regarding progress regarding the



appointment of a new councillor especially as he had offered to stand. Cllr Sinclair explained that progress is being made and the council hoped to include this on the agenda of our next meeting.

d) Mr Randles read out a statement endorsing the good work that the council do and the Council expressed their gratitude and judging by the reaction those present endorsed the statement. Mr Randels also went on to draw the attention of those present to the situation on the Windrush featured on a recent episode of BBC Country File regarding the discharge of raw sewerage into the river. Whilst it is not in our Parish he was asking all present to keep this in mind relative to any future planning etc. All agreed to do so.

e) Mr Battersby again brought up the subject of the hotel lights. Cllr Roche mentioned that this had been a subject of a previous meeting and we felt it had been dealt with then. Cllr Sinclair suggested that we review the previous notes. Cllr Chapman mentioned that Mr Hodges, the general manager of the hotel used to attend our meetings and perhaps we should write to him to ask him to resume his attendance and give us an update regards the status of the hotel lighting.

180717/8 Procedures

Cllr Sinclair explained that the key procedures had been adopted and mentioned again that they are available on the web site to read and or download. The Standing Orders are about to be revised to incorporate the change regarding GDPR. Once these are available the Council will review the new model and adopt those as soon as available. Progress is being made on other procedures still under review.

180717/9 Parish Clerk replacement

Cllr Sinclair reported we had approached all previous applicants, but none were available. We continue to consult with CDC, GAPTC and consult with local councils/councillors and will report back at our next meeting

180717/10 Councillor Training to receive a report on training undertaken and approve future training

Cllr Thomas and Cllr Sinclair both reported that they had attended the GAPTC Chairmanship training course and had found it to be very useful. Cllr Roche, Sinclair and Thomas are also going to attend the next convenient 'how to be a better Councillor. Cllr Sinclair suggested that we should ask the new councillor to attend once co-opted. All agreed

180717/11 Finance

- a) To consider and approve current financial status. – **approved**
- b) To note payments sanctioned since last meeting:
 - Additional HMRC Payment following PATA recalculation £10:00
 - Payment of PATA administration fees £25:00 – **approved**



- c) To consider and authorise payments due:
- Clerk balance of final salary following PATA recalculation £56.99
 - GAPTC Chairman Skills Training £80
 - Community Heartbeat - Defibrillator Electrodes £45.60
 - Came & Company - Insurance Renewals £399.01- **approved**
- d) To consider any other financial matters:
Cllr Chapman re-iterated that we have submitted all the required Audit information in accordance with the deadlines that were agreed, and confirmed that we believe we are fully compliant with all statutory legislation in relation to financial reporting and accountability. Currently we are in the period where parishioners are able, by request, to access and view all of the financial documentation of the Parish Council

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Planning Applications:

To report CDC decisions made since the last meeting: **C/17/01415/STC – Licensing Application Consultation – Street Trading at The Grafters, Fosseway, Lower Slaughter – no longer visible on the register so assume granted**

17/05039/FUL – Change of use of existing yard and building to a builders merchant yard, including installation of fencing, external storage racking and associated infrastructure at Units 1 and 2, The Grafters - **Granted**

17/05115/FUL – Two storey extension to rear of 15 Mill Lane, Lower Slaughter – **Application withdrawn**

18/00361/FUL and 18/00362/LBC – Conversion of existing garage and domestic storage to residential unit for family use, staff accommodation or holiday let at Church Farm House, Copse Hill Road, Lower Slaughter –**Granted**

To consider new planning applications:

18/02295/FUL Erection of two-storey extension and erection of detached double garage with ancillary accommodation - The Orchard Kings Well Lane Lower Slaughter Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 2HT - **No Comment**

To discuss any other planning issues.

18/01681/FUL Redevelopment of existing scrap yard and haulage depot to create Electric Car Charging Service Station and Associated Works - Scrap Haulage Yard Gilder Fosseway Lower Slaughter Gloucestershire GL54 2EY (posted 12/7/18) – Deadline Thu 02 Aug 2018 - **It was agreed that as this is such a significant application the following actions were agreed. That Cllr Sinclair will discuss the application with Wyck Rissington PC and Cllr Keeling. We would make enquiries as to the possibility of holding a 'drop in' session with the architects to allow the villagers to learn more details regarding the application. To agree a time and location for an EGM to include this on the agenda. To Circulate door to door information regarding where parishioners can find out more information regarding the application, what action parishioners can take, the date and location for the EGM and if it has been possible to arrange the date and location for the 'drop in'.**

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18/02396/ADV Advert Application for Roadside signage to direct delivery drivers and members of the public to the business premises at The Cotswold Brewing Co College Farm Stow Road Bourton-On-The-Water Cheltenham - **No Comment**

180717/13 Highways, Traffic and Parking Report

Cllr Sinclair reported that the system for reporting infringements of the TRO within the village had achieved a degree of success. Since January, when this began, we have had eight reports, seven of which have been contacted by Stow police, one did not have sufficient data. The Council extended their thanks to Mr Fennel for administering the coach reporting. It was also reported that the police are looking at if and how they may enforce the TRO infringements moving up from a letter telling the company and driver that they have contravened to perhaps penalising persistent offenders at least. It is important that villagers report TRO infringements other wise it may look like we do not have a problem. Cllr Sinclair reminded people that the web site has the details of how to do this.

Councillor Thomas reported on progress with regards the outstanding road repair works in the village. He was pleased to report that some of the potholes on the road into the village had been repaired. Following enquiries with Gloucester County Council confirmation had been received that the outstanding repair works in the village were on this years work plan but it will take some time to commence as the works require a road closure and the AMEY representative was shortly to go into hospital for an operation. On his return to work Mr Thomas will meet him on site to discuss the likely timing of the repairs and also the improvement works to the Church entrance

180717/14 Flood Alleviation Report Nothing to report

180717/15 Village Grass Cutting and Maintenance Report:

Cllr Chapman reported that the grass had recently been fertilised and maintenance continues as per the contract. He also mentioned that Bibury Services would be reminded of the need for a special cut in the lead up to the Village Fete

180717/16 Local Businesses, Church, Fete and Village Hall Report No Comment

180717/17 Allotments and Orchard Report

Cllr Chapman was pleased to report that the working were actively formulating a positive plan for the allotments going forward. As a by product of the working group a number of new tenants had come forward. Cllr Roche suggested a sponsorship package which Cllr Chapman agreed to consider. Cllr Sinclair enquired regarding the plan regarding the trees sown down two years ago. Cllr Thomas explained that there were a number of solutions being discussed and this would be communicated once agreed.



180717/18 Parish Website

Cllr Sinclair reported that the URL is now displayed on the notice board and appears in all correspondence. It is worth mentioning that the Parish Council has a dedicated telephone number.

180717/19 Data Protection Update

Cllr Sinclair explained that this would be dealt with as part of a new model Standing Order which will shortly be published by NALC. This will be reviewed and adopted as soon as available.

180717/20 Reports from Wardens:

a) river – Other than some reed growth outside of the hotel Mr Ayers reported no significant issues

b) Mill bank footpath In a note from a parishioner regarding a follow up to correspondence regarding the mill bank path mentioned on our previous meeting (minute 180514/10) there was an inaccurate statement. It was claimed that the council commissioned a report from Gloucester Wildlife Trust. In fact, the council were originally asked regarding commissioning a report but declined. The council were however eventually presented with a copy of the report.

For clarity the report agreed with strimming the bank back to the ground on a rotation of one third per year. To further support the repatriation of the natural bank the public be encouraged to walk only on the ‘public maintainable’ section. As previously stated the council do not have jurisdiction over this path other than to ‘publicly maintain’ the path but advised that Gloucester Council may have funding for this.

It was agreed that the villager would contact the owner and contact details were provided following the meeting.

It was also agreed that the council would contact the land management company. I spoke to Amy at Perdix who are the management company for the Hambro estate are. Amy confirmed the ownership regarding the bank and she also explained that the estate grounds man would likely have carried out the strimming as it forms part of their grounds maintenance. She suggested it was probably her people therefore who had carried out the strimming the bank.

c) Rights of Way

Mr Randels listed a number of issues regarding various obstructions to footpaths within the Parish and presented a detailed report to the council. Cllr Chapman thanked him for the report and it was agreed that the council review action.

d) Snow

Mr Barnes Mentioned that he will be ensuring that the salt bins are replenished in time for the colder weather.



e) Trees

Mr Edwin raised the issue of overhanging bows over the road as presenting a possible safety risk. Cllr Thomas agreed to write to the land owner pointing out the risk and asking that they consider remedial action. Cllr Thomas asked Mr Edwin to provide contact details of the land owner

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Correspondence:

Cllr Sinclair reported the highlights but in the interest of time includes here a short report of matters dealt with.

Mr Edwin - Pointed out that we had an old copy of the Employers insurance on display. We thanked Colin for pointing this out and I can report that it was immediately rectified.

Mrs Randels - Karen and a number of other people had noticed the fly tipping on Kingswell Lane. Mrs Randels reported that she had informed CDC and the rubbish has now been removed

Mr Cochran - Notified the council regarding inaccuracy's in the Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting Minutes. He mentioned that he had been made aware of some parishioners being unhappy with the resignation of the Clerk but didn't share their views and gave the Council his full endorsement regarding the work that it does.

Mr Steve Sykes - Bike repair business looking for free or inexpensive premises. Unfortunately we are not aware of any

CDC Environmental and Regulatory Services - Consultation about Dog Fouling and the adoption of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)-Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. - We await further information

CDC - Domestic recycling poster – Five easy steps to pre-sorted recycling - this is now on the web site and displayed on the notice board

Police - Garrett Glyn - Police Sergeant 745 – responding to Paul Perruzza, Heron Coaches (see Paul Perruzza correspondence)

Paul Perruzza - Extract of email to the police and Parish Council in response to letter pointing out their infringement of the TRO. "This is outright discrimination and the Chairman of Lower Slaughter Parish Council aught to be utterly ashamed of himself; and needs to educate himself on the impact to the environment of people travelling in groups of cars when not necessary. This should also be recognised by the local police force as well. This is a classic case of British upper class snobbery at its very best."

Phil Battersby - Following up regarding upgrade to the Old Dovecote. Discussed at today's meeting

Colin Edwin - Observations regards Clerk resignation. We thanked Colin for his constructive input and are taking his comments into consideration

Ms Bennett - Re concerns regards Clerk resignation. This has been dealt with at today's meeting

LOWER SLAUGHTER PARISH COUNCIL
Interim Clerk Paul Sinclair. c/o Park View, Mill Lane, lower Slaughter
Tel: 01451 828164 Email: clerklspc@gmail.com
Website: www.lowerslaughter.btck.co.uk

180717/22 Date of next meeting:

Monday 17 September 2018 – 18.45 venue Village Hall Confirmed and a revised date 21 January 2019 was acknowledged

180717/23 Meeting close

Cllr Sinclair thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 8:10

180717 LSPC Minutes

Signed



Date

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RESIGNATION OF THE PARISH CLERK

A number of parishioners wish to make the following statement under Agenda item 3 pf this Extraordinary Meeting.

We are aware that the Parish Council is not legally entitled to make a decision on the appointment of a new Clerk without first holding an agendaed public discussion along the lines of ... ' to consider the appointment of a new Clerk'. We ask that such a discussion is held at the next PC meeting in July and that Councillors take into account the following points.

Such an appointment is an essential safeguard for all Lower Slaughter parishioners, including yourselves and especially for your potential exposure to personal liability. The Clerk ensures there is independent, objective and authoritative guidance to enable Parish Councillors to act for all parishioners on the basis of law and accepted procedures. Adherance to such law and procedures is not optional, it is compulsory.

Over recent years, many procedures have not always been followed. For example, only in the last three months, via the recently departed Clerk, does the Council now have in place Standing Orders, the correct Financial Regulations and a new Code of Conduct. Other policies and procedures still await adoption, including Grievance and Disciplinary and Complaints Procedures.

The appointment of a properly qualified Clerk also allows continuity, especially at the change of councillors. All present Councillor roles are up for election next May. It also gives administrative support to Councillors as volunteers, which may in turn encourage more villagers to volunteer to fill vacancies.

Since it is so difficult to find reasons for not having a Clerk, we were



disappointed that the Chairman of the Parish Council declined offers to meet villagers on the matter and in particular declined the option of reconciliation/mediation.

We would also welcome responses to the following questions :

- 1) Did the Clerk receive regular, recorded, monitoring sessions with a Councillor, concerning her performance?
- 2) Did the Parish Council have any form of grievance and complaints procedures in place, as Employment law requires?

We would also like to understand why the audited accounts were delayed this year and why, therefore, an Extension had to be sought.

We applaud the voluntary commitment of the Parish Councillors , and the impressive progress made in the last three months under the former Clerk's guidance. A continuing commitment to professionalism, openness and transparency through the appointment of a new Clerk is, you would surely agree, essential to ensuring that Lower Slaughter Parish Council goes forward with a good reputation which will encourage future Clerks to work for it.

I leave a copy of this statement with you for your further consideration.

Elizabeth Bennett
22 June 2018