

Minutes of the Elmore Annual Parish Meeting held at Elmore Village Hall on Tuesday 17th May 2016 at 7.45 pm

Present	Parish Councillors Mr J Field (JF) Chair, Mr N Meek (NM), Mrs J Hobbs (JH), Mr T Jones (TJ), Mrs P Turner (PT), Clerk Mrs D Jones
In Attendance	Cllr Dave Mossman, Cllr Gill Oxley, Neighbourhood Warden Carol Novoth. Mrs V Overton, Mr B Overton and Mrs D Barker
1 Apologies	Cllr A Blackburn
2 Election of the Parish Council (Results of 5 th May)	<p>This year Andy Nash decided not to seek re-election as a Councillor. Up to this point Andy had been a long standing member of the PC – indeed for over 20 years and his advice on all matters has been valued but his contribution to Planning aspects has been of particular help to us. We advertised for new candidates to come forward as others on the Council were also seeking to stand down. However, as only one volunteer came forward – and of course that is what they are – volunteers – the remainder of the sitting Councillors agreed to continue in office until such time as replacements were found.</p> <p>As only 5 people registered for the Parish Council Election, all were ‘deemed to have been elected’ as the seats were not contested.</p> <p>We are therefore very pleased to welcome Paula Turner as a new Councillor for Elmore.</p>
3 Police Report	<p>March to May reports. A motorbike nearly hit police car along Elmore Lane East - erratic driving</p> <p>Joyriding in Elmore Court car park. Only 1 call so possibly a one off.</p> <p>Burglary Elmore Lane East – patio doors smashed to gain entry whilst occupiers were away for the night.</p> <p>Police remind everyone that with hotter and lighter nights coming, please be more vigilant in locking all doors and windows when left unattended. House or shed alarms to be set also. Be aware of any suspicious vehicles possibly looking at empty houses.</p>
<p>4 Chairman’s Annual Statement at the Annual Parish Meeting 17th May 2016</p> <p>This ‘Statement’ or Report by the Chair of the Parish Council is a legal requirement and has to be delivered at the Annual meeting.</p> <p>“My address has been scheduled on the Agenda prior to the Open Question period as some of what I have to say may prompt questions from the floor. The last 12 months have been quite eventful for the Elmore Parish Council. Several of the topics I will mention are scheduled as Agenda Items in their own right so I’ll only touch on them briefly as more detail will be included when we cover each item in turn.”</p> <p>The Bridge. This year has seen the first full 12months of production of our newsletter ,The Bridge ,which we introduced as an experiment in order to fill a perceived gap in communication and to replace the Annual Newsletter. Of course I am rather biased but I feel it has been a great success with many contributions from residents and some very interesting stories. What we need now is some constructive feedback so that we can take this project forward the way you want it develop.</p> <p>Website www.elmoreparish.co.uk We have revamped the Elmore Website, thanks mainly to the efforts of our Clerk, Dorie Jones and we would welcome feedback on this project too as well as contributions and photographs.</p> <p>Riverbank In April 2015, we joined forces with the Environment Agency in order to repair some erosion damage to our stretch of the riverbank. We had a good turnout of volunteers and managed to carry out some significant work. However, we only scratched the surface as regards the amount of work needed on our riverbank so would like to take this work forward and will be advertising future events to cut withes and stakes, making faggots as well as completing some more repair work on sites where erosion has taken place.</p> <p>Defibrillators In early May 2015 we installed the first of our 2 Defibrillators in Elmore Back and familiarisation training also took place for those interested in learning how to use the equipment. This first piece of equipment was paid for entirely by the Parish Council but as part of our Emergency Plan we forecasted the</p>	

need for a second defibrillator elsewhere in the village, as our community is so widespread. Therefore we asked for donations to try and raise the £2,000 necessary to buy a second Defibrillator and get it installed. We were amazed by the generosity of several members of the village as well many others as well as The Elmore Land Charity who contributed £300 and a massive £1,660 was donated – the small shortfall was made up from PC funds. In anticipation of the installation of the 2nd equipment, we adopted the red telephone box adjacent to EVH and gave it a facelift with paint donated by Crown. The second equipment was installed in the telephone box in September and a second training event took place here in the hall. It is our intention to run refresher training later this year.

Many thanks to Trevor Jones and our Clerk who have been the driving force behind this project. However, there will be on-going running costs as parts of the equipment are time sensitive and will need replacing in due course – namely the batteries and the electronic pads. We have aimed off for this in our budget.

EPC Financial Forecast

Our finances remain in a healthy state and our bank balance at the end of the last FY was £ 4,937.98. You will see from the balance sheet that we had an excess of expenditure versus income of some £917.64 during this FY and this was due to the costs of purchasing the Defibrillators and getting them installed. However, we have built into the budget a ‘Contingency Fund’ to cover unforeseen expenses and this currently stands at £1,500. In addition, we have ring-fenced a ponds’ maintenance fund of £600 and, as I intimated earlier, we have aimed off for the maintenance for our defibrillators and this will amount to £160 a year and will accumulate until we need the funds every 3 years or so.

This contingency budgeting, totalling £2,260 means that, although our bank balance looks quite healthy, we only have the flexibility to spend just over £2,500 on an annual basis and much of that is already earmarked for insurance, wages, membership of the PC Association, use of EVH, printing costs for The Bridge and the website.

Precept. The Parish Council Precept is currently £2,400 and appears on households’ Council Tax bills and varies according to the banding of the property. When the financial recession hit the UK we felt that we could not justify any increase so pegged it at the same figure and by the end of this FY that will have remained the same for the 6 years. When we cover ‘Finance’ later on I will raise the idea of a small increase in the Precept

Broadband

This has been a disappointing year as regards progress on improving the broadband speeds into Elmore. Despite many promises from the Government, BT and Fastershire (aka GCC) we are still way behind our immediate neighbours and staggering to communicate in the digital world in which we live.

The Government’s promise to give us all 2Mbps by the end of 2015 didn’t materialise, then this pledge slipped to 2017 and maybe 2020 in some areas – it now appears the Government has abandoned the plan altogether! However, despite Fastershire and BT making a decision to exclude us from the new – and much heralded - microwave project, there is some light on the horizon. GCC has now stated that Elmore will be included in the Fastershire project but as yet we do not have a timeframe for this great event.

I will be covering this topic in more detail when we deal with the specific Agenda item later in the meeting but I would be happy to expand on the matter during question time.

Canals

We were made aware that the Canals & Rivers Trust were planning to automate all 19 of the canal bridges between Gloucester and Sharpness. The bridges would be operated on demand by boaters using an App on their phones or tablets, thus giving them priority over road traffic.

Elmore PC, along with the other parishes in Severn Voice, were opposed to his idea as we felt we would be put in a vulnerable situation if boaters had unregulated use of bridge openings.

When added to an increased use of the canal for recreational purposes and the possibility of joining the canal with the one currently being renovated from Saul Junction to The Thames there was a great danger that canal users would create both disruption of local traffic and delays to emergency services.

We have also been painfully aware that the parking on the approaches to the canal bridge has been less than satisfactory. Increased use by boaters, rowers, walkers and fishermen will add to the problem. Subsequently we’ve had several meetings with C&RT as well as GCC and a small amount of progress has been made;

CCTV cameras will be placed to monitor traffic build up and bridge openings curtailed accordingly; The Control Centre will now be based at Frampton which is the second busiest crossing outside Gloucester; Parking at each bridge site will be improved;

Each bridge will have its own local Action Group so that specific issues can be resolved quickly.

No firm decisions have as yet been made but the trial is under way at Sandfield Bridge – adjacent to the Stables

Café at Saul Junction – and the plans will be modified once the results of this trial have been analysed. In addition, C&RT has not, as yet, secured the necessary funding of £4.5 million for the project. Nationally, C&RT has had huge unforeseen expenditure on repairs to their network following the floods in Cumbria so the future of the local project is by no means clear.

Elmore Emergency Plan

There aren't many people left in the village who remember the serious flooding in 1947 and we've had a lot of newcomers arrive over the last 10 to 15 years so the memory of local disasters tends to be forgotten.

The Parish Council felt that a plan was necessary in case we were hit by another emergency, be it a natural one like the recent flooding of 2007 or a recurrence of foot and mouth as was the case in 2001 - which could isolate part or all of our community. A document was crafted that not only outlined what actions should be carried out in the event of an emergency but also an short history of events in the village and elsewhere which explain the rationale for having an Emergency Plan.

At the end of 2013 a draft Emergency Plan was circulated around the village to some 16 key individuals – some of whom are present tonight - and although this consultation took rather longer than we had expected, it has now been completed. As a result of the comments received during the consultation, the document has been finalised and a copy is now on the Parish website.

The Plan on the website is the 'Unrestricted Version' – there is another 'Restricted Version' - which contains sensitive information like names and contact numbers of individuals as well as a list of what we would term 'vulnerable residents' – i.e. those that would need assistance in case of an emergency. We appreciate that such a list will need regular updating and the criteria for inclusion on the list is shown in the plan – for example, someone over the age of 80 would be considered but not necessarily included!

In times gone past anyone over retirement age might have been included but we tend to be a lot healthier now so although we've set the age barrier at 80 – some who have achieved this venerable age will probably be dashing around helping others!!

The Parish Council would like to formally thank all those who contributed to the formulation of this document, which will provide the framework for action should a disaster strike.

5 Open Question Time	<p>Questions about defibrillators. Mr Barry Overton asked if we could find out what was needed for the annual inspection of the defibrillator, whether electrical or not? Also CHT has contacted him about a change of passwords to make reports into the recording system but that nothing had happened. TJ agreed to check on both of these points. Questions about Canal Bridge crossing. Mr Barry Overton asked whether changes could be made at the Pilot Bridge. Currently we give priority to vehicles coming into Elmore. On the Elmore side where there is overparking in the road it is often very difficult for the oncoming traffic to pass the queue waiting to leave Elmore. If the priority was changed, the Elmore queue could pass safely into a 2 vehicle road space on the Pilot side and allow easier access into the narrow, overparked Elmore road. DM recalled that Highways had changed the system to the current access. As part of the C&RT review of bridge operation, task groups would be set up for each bridge and that this could be helped by removing overparking into an adjacent car parking area in a field.</p>	TJ
6 Declaration of Members' Interest in Agenda Items	Nothing was declared by the Councillors.	
7 Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting on 19 th May 2015	The Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting on 19 th May 2015 were proposed as a true record by Barry Overton. Seconded by TJ.	
8 Matters Arising	Matters arising from the Minutes of 19 th May 2015 JF reported that action had been taken on all matters arising from the minutes.	

9 Talk	<p>Neighbourhood Warden: Carol Novoth Carol provides support and can help with issues including: Supporting vulnerable People: Intimidating or Anti-social Behaviour: Abandoned Vehicles: Bogus Callers: Home Security & Crime Prevention Advice: Hate Crime & Bullying: Litter, Dog Fouling & Fly tipping. Carol described the job as varied and interesting working in a team who were on call to attend emergency situations as well as helping solve issues and problems for people in our area. Call 07970 250343 to speak to Carol or email: carol.novoth@stroud.gov.uk for help. JF thanked Carol for her interesting talk and congratulated her for fulfilling such a such in a large area.</p>	
10 Finance:	<p>The Parish Precept for 2017/18: We think the time is right to raise the Precept by a small margin. The Precept for this year remains at the level pegged for the last 5 years. There seems to be a general consensus so it was proposed that we bid for the Precept with a rise of 3% for the next FY. About 3 years ago there was a change in the way the Precept was paid to Parishes and anyone on Band D or below and who is claiming what used to be called Housing Benefit, is not required to pay their share. Although we still ask for £2,400 from Stroud District Council the amount each household pays towards the Precept may change from year to year depending on how many people in the village are exempt. On average this will probably mean an annual increase of just above or below £1.50 per year. Account and Audit: The system of auditing has changed over the last year and links in with our website. As a small parish with a turnover of less than £10,000 we are required to publish our accounts for audit on our website. In the future, all invoices over £100 have also to published on our website. Therefore, we are now ‘required’ to have a website rather than just wanting one . Forecast Expenditure for 2016/17: Currently we only have one major project in the pipeline and that is the possible construction of a proper car park opposite this hall. This project would be done in conjunction with the Village Hall Committee and we have currently earmarked some £1,000 as our contribution but this may not be enough.</p>	
11 County Councillor’s Report	<p>Cllr Blackburn’s report The GCC year has just concluded. Gloucestershire council is still a hung council with no overall majority. Conservatives are continuing their administration with 23 councillors (44%). There are 14 Lib/Dem, 9 Labour and 6 others. The number of ‘Cabinet members’ Chief Officers and Councillors has been cut, saving £114m over the last 7 years thus keeping ‘the rate’ down. No increase in Council tax over this period. Now, with no Government grant we have had to raise the GCC element of your Council tax by 1.99% plus another approx. 2% on old people’s services. This results in a total bill to households with SDC and Police rises of plus 2-4% The latest matters exercising the GCC are better broadband, devolution, putting in a bid for more money and powers with DC’s and resisting Cotswold DC’s odd idea of joining west Oxfordshire. Potholes: In addition to our own £43m on Highways, GCC has recently got another £3m from Government for roads. Tony has £30,000 to spend in his division (9,400 voters) plus another £1500 “lengthman’s scheme” i.e. where repair of one pothole could lead to several others being filled on that bit of road. Under a GCC/SDC arrangement he had £5000 for Youth projects in 2016/17. The number one priority is road safety; specifically measures along the A38 where there have now been 3 fatalities in separate accidents in 6 months.</p>	
12 District Councillor’s Report	<p>Cllr Mossman’s report As you can imagine it has been relatively quiet in the election period. The results of the election in the Hardwicke Ward were that David Mossman, Gill Oxley Tom</p>	

	<p>Skinner all conservatives were elected as SDC Councillors for the Hardwicke Ward for the period 2016 to 2020</p> <p>Hunts Grove is now progressing forward, and the Super Surgery has been confirmed, it will be sited next to the Dance Studios near the Nass Lane roundabout close to the Park and Ride bus terminal, it is anticipated that the surgery will be in operation early in 2018, and a presentation will be arranged by the Doctors who will be running the surgery in the near future for the public. This Surgery will support Kingsway and Hunts Grove, and take a large number of patients from Rose Bank/Seven Vale surgeries which are badly overloaded.</p> <p>In addition to this I am starting discussions with the NHS and Rose Bank re a satellite surgery to assist with the 750 homes in Hunts Grove on the last Phase of this development.</p> <p>Food Waste collection will start later this year and bins will be provided by SDC- further information will be circulated closer to the start of these collections.</p> <p>I am now a member of the Road Safety Group run by GCC and SDC and will be organising a demonstration of the ANPR camera's with to begin with Hardwicke, Moreton Vallenge, and Whitminster Parish Councils to look at speeding/safety problems on the A38 .</p> <p>Incinerator is progressing forward and some activity will start on site in June, but main construction is about to start in September. I am chairing the Community Liaison Group, with Local Parishes/District Councillors/County Councillors/UBB/SDC/GCC to ensure that any disruption during construction is kept to a minimum and the public are informed in advance of anything that may affect their daily lives, also we are just completing the investigation into methods of independently Monitoring the plume of the incinerator, and we hope to have final agreement shortly on the methods/cost of this independent Monitoring so our residents can be assured that there is no danger from the plume.</p> <p>Finally as we now have a team of 3 District Councillors, it is hoped that we will be able to ensure that the 8 parishes in our extended ward are correctly serviced.</p>	
13 Highways	<p>Potholes Recent indications of future pothole repairs have appeared with yellow lines around some of the holes through the village.</p> <p>Severn Trent Repairs on Haywicks Lane Leaks are continuing from the new pipe line laid 3 years ago.</p>	
14 Elmore Emergency Plan update	<p>This Emergency Plan will remain a living document, which will be reviewed annually.</p>	
15 Broadband and Telephone update	<p>Broadband</p> <p>We all know that we have a miserable broadband reception and when compared to our nearest village across the canal we are in the dark ages!</p> <p>The canal has always seemed to be the stumbling block notwithstanding various failed attempts to drill under it.</p> <p>We shouldn't forget that we've come a long way since dial-up Internet and shared lines, which was the situation prior to 2009. But then again the rest of UK has moved forward too and at a far faster rate than us.</p> <p>We thought we'd made a major breakthrough with BT when we hosted a meeting here on 29th August 2014 and BT told us quite categorically that a revolutionary microwave system was going to be installed to fire the broadband signal across the canal and give both Longney and Elmore superfast broadband.</p> <p>We saw a gradual progress of the project as the microwave pole was erected; the dishes were put on top and the lines connected to the junction box. The whole system was due to 'go live' by the end of 2015 but sadly BT/Openreach remained behind schedule right up to the last minute.</p>	

	<p>However, on 8th January I was invited to a launch event at The Pilot, attended by all the great and good of the local area only to discover that a decision had been made by Fastershire and BT to exclude Elmore from the new microwave system.</p> <p>Since then I have been in constant communication with BT, our local MP – Neil Carmichael, as well as Ed Vaizey, the Government Minister responsible for Digital Economy; in addition I've written to Fastershire, SDC and GCC. Progress has been painfully slow but up to last weekend we had a firm promise from GCC to include Elmore in the Fastershire project but they were awaiting the cost figures from BT so that the necessary budgets could be found.</p> <p>However, I noted from a Government announcement on 30th April that they have now abandoned their pledge to give rural areas faster broadband because it is too expensive and I quote“not everyone wants it”. !!</p> <p>Where are we now? I still await confirmation from GCC that we will be included but I have no idea as to the timeframe.</p>	
16 Parish Communications	<p>Website the website is now live but is being developed. This website is a legal requirement in order to publish information and financial activity of the Parish Council. There is a small annual charge for maintenance. Technical help and support is ongoing.</p> <p>The Bridge is now an established feature in the village. A settled annual pattern of publication has been established. There is no intention to move to colour because this would push up the costs disproportionately. However any suggestions of how the format and content might be improved would be welcome.</p> <p>E-mail database: We have some 54% of households on the electronic database and who therefore receive e-mail updates on road closures, security matters etc. We would of course like 100% but realise that this is not achievable as some people in the village don't use the internet at all. However, as part of the Emergency Plan we would like to see a wider communications base so would encourage people to become part of it. Only 2 people have the complete list – me and our Clerk so your privacy is protected.</p>	
17 Any Other Business	<p>Snow Warden JH reported that we are required to make a request for winter road salt. JH asked if we have a Winter Action Plan included in our Emergency Plan. JF agreed to look at this.</p> <p>Lake Street road marker posts were discussed. It was agreed that a plan to position these would need careful planning.</p> <p>TJ asked DM if there are any plans to improve J12 (M5) to accommodate the extra traffic which the incinerator would generate both during construction and subsequent operation. DM said sadly, no. It is a matter of concern to DM but the assumption has been made that new traffic to the site would not exceed traffic when the site was last operational and therefore legally no extra provision is needed.</p>	JH JF
18 Date of next Annual Parish Meeting	To be held during May 2017	
	The Chairman thanked those present for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.	
	SignedDate	