

**Minutes of the Elmore Parish Council Meeting held at
Elmore Village Hall on Friday 28th February 2014 at 7.45pm**

| | | |
|---------|---|--|
| Present | Parish Councillors: Mr J Field (JF) Chair, Mr A Nash (AN) Vice Chair, Mrs J Hobbs (JH), Mrs C Stewart (CS), Mr T Jones (TJ), Clerk Mrs D Jones (DJ), Cllr Anthony Blackburn (GCC), Mr David Mossman (Hardwicke PC) | |
| 1 | Apologies: Cllr Graham Littleton (SDC). Police Representative | |
| 2 | Open Question Time: There were no parishioners present to ask questions. | |
| 3 | Police Report: Chair read the report sent by e.mail: No crimes have been reported to the police since the last Parish Council Meeting in December 2013. Recent incident reports have been in relation to impassable roads due to flooding. Police are aware of our concerns in relation to the danger spectators are putting themselves into when watching the Severn Bore. Police hope to patrol the areas at the relevant times to advise and keep people safe from harm. CS confirmed seeing a significant police presence in the parish. | |
| 4 | Declaration of Member's Interest in Agenda Items. Nothing to declare. | |
| 5 | Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 th December 2013 were proposed by TJ and seconded by CS. | |
| 6 | Matters Arising from the minutes of the meeting 13th December 2013 were all addressed during the meeting as separate Agenda items; - item 3/6 JF had informed parishioners via the database of the need for security and information about the Crimestoppers number. More information to be added to the EPC Website. | |
| 7 | County Councillor's Report: Cllr Anthony Blackburn reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full Council meeting had ratified the Rates and Council Tax for 2014 – 2015. No increase to existing charges. The budget for the young and elderly remains unchanged. • The discussions about faster broadband for this area were just not working effectively. • The badger cull in this area had not been a great success and he encouraged local farmers to give their opinions to a national committee who appear to have taken over. • The flooding issues should be given more transparency with proper costing and policy from the Environment Agency. • There is a GCC fund for financial support for victims of flooding. <p>The proposed closure of Sellars Bridge was discussed. GCC had failed to notify Elmore PC or residents of the closure. AN reminded the meeting that Elmore is 'an island' with 3 feeder roads, therefore it is vital that information is passed directly to this parish. AN and JF were thanked for their action in contacting the correct authority to get the bridge closure postponed until the Stonebench road was no longer under water. David Mossman from Hardwicke parish council offered to send any road closure information given to his parish which would affect Elmore.</p> <p>The 'contracting out' of control of public footpath services to Amey was discussed. Cllr Blackburn believed that that Amey would oversee parish work done by volunteers for smaller projects such as footpath maintenance but that larger projects would be done by Amey. AN confirmed that legal responsibility remains with GCC/Amey and JF believed that this was largely a move to outsource work to an army of local volunteers with little or no appropriate funding</p> | |
| 8 | District Councillor's Report: In the absence of Cllr Littleton, no report was made. | |
| 9 | Finance – Forecast Expenditure: In preparation for the audit, these accounts will be updated and re-circulated in early April for approval. JF reported a healthy balance and that the precept figure remains the same as the last 3 years. The size of the contingency fund was discussed and it was agreed that the figure, which was fixed 2 years ago, will remain unchanged as no major expenditure was forecast for the next financial year. | |

| | | |
|----|--|-------------|
| 10 | <p>Flooding issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of EA replies to the SEFRMS Consultation has already been circulated via email to those on the database. JF expressed his disappointment that so few members of the public, not just in Elmore but in the whole Severn Estuary area, had responded to this consultation document. CS suggested that a natural desire to protect one's own property from flooding has led to less interest in the bigger flooding picture. • Following a general feeling among the Councillors, a letter had been sent to the Prime Minister on 19th February (copy to Neil Carmichael MP) expressed EPC's views on the EA and the flooding issues. This has so far received no reply. • The EA eventually responded to EPC's request for information under the Freedom of Information Act; £230,000 has been spent over the last 10 years to maintain flood defences in Elmore and Longney of which £14,000 p.a. had apparently been spent on grass cutting, a fraction of the £20m estimated to realign the defences as previously proposed by the EA. • There is to be a meeting of Severn Voice at Whitminster village hall on March 24th at which NC will be present and the flooding issues will be discussed. • It was agreed that Niel Carmichael MP should be invited to our next EPC meeting in June. Questions should be sent to him in advance. • AN stated that mowing of the flood defences at Weir Green is done 3 or 4 times p.a. to kill off seedlings which might grow and weaken the defences. He also expressed the view that there is a schism between the good EA workers on the ground and the 'back office' staff who do appreciate local conditions and issues. • CS expressed the view that the government is not giving agricultural land the security and the planning priority it should have, and have little concept of the local realities. | DJ |
| 11 | <p>Stroud Charter. AN reported that this is a benign document that shows 'good faith' on the part of both the Parish and Stroud District Council. TJ suggested it need not appear on future agendas – this was agreed.</p> | |
| 12 | <p>Highways & State of the Village: Potholes on Lake Street had been reported but not yet repaired. A letter to Gloucester Highways about a snow plough attachment had not yet received any reply. Weir Green parking 'deterrence' was working and GCC was to erect the notice warning that the road was 'unsuitable for HGV'. Topsoil was to be added to the flood bank damage in the spring. Thanks were recorded for the help from Chris Camm and Sophie Round. The problems of the proposed closure of Sellars Bridge was covered in item 7. Repeated closure of the Stonebench Road due to tidal flooding highlighted the need for improved communication from GCC and Highways. Prior to the meeting Cllr Graham Littleton had discussed access to Kenton Green with JF for clearing blocked drainage. JF agreed to organise this. Fly tipping was reported as an ongoing problem. Recent tipping of broken glass, close to JF's house, needs to be resolved together with tipping on the Stonebench Road. It was agreed to encourage all parishioners to report fly tipping for free collection.</p> | JF JF |
| 13 | <p>There were no outstanding Planning Applications to consider. Possible changes to Planning Regulations: Changes to include: up to 3 redundant farm buildings per farm can be converted into residences without planning permission but with building control: house extensions of up to 8 sq metres to be allowed without planning permission.</p> | |
| 14 | <p>War Memorial Plaque – TJ displayed the new plaque to the meeting. It was agreed that TJ would devise a method of fixing it to a post by the Memorial. AN offered his help. JF agreed to write to Michael Watts to ask if the Elmore Land Charity would be willing to make a contribution towards the cost of the Plaque.</p> | TJ, AN, JF. |

| | | |
|----|---|----------------------------|
| 15 | <p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>The Councillors felt that Friday was not a good night for an EPC meeting and these should be avoided in the future.</p> <p>JF agreed that a notice of election of councillors should be posted on all possible notice boards as soon as the notices and forms are available from SDC in early March.</p> <p>The Annual Parish Council newsletter is in production and awaiting contributions from Councillors.</p> <p>Discussion about the value of the Church (PCC) newsletter suggested that local parishioners were unhappy about the lack of space for Elmore news. The Longney and Epney PC have financed the production of the PCC newsletter and now use the space for their PC information. It was suggested that we should produce an Elmore Community Newsletter on a quarterly basis to complement our Website, reinforce local issues and invite content from the church. TJ volunteered to talk to Collin Ellis and the vicar and report back. It was agreed that £50 should be made available for initial set up costs.</p> | <p>All Cllrs</p> <p>TJ</p> |
| 16 | Date of Next Meetings: Thursday 5 th June 2014: Annual Parish Meeting followed by Annual Parish Council Meeting. | |
| | There being no further business the meeting was formally closed by JF at 21.10. | |
| | <p>Signed</p> <p>Date</p> | |