

**Minutes of the Elmore Parish Council Meeting held at
Elmore Village Hall on Friday 3rd October 2014 at 7.45 pm**

Present	Parish Councillors: Mr J Field (JF) Chair, Mr A Nash (AN) Vice Chair, Mrs J Hobbs (JH), Mr N Meek (NM). Clerk Mrs D Jones (DJ)	Action
In Attendance	Cllr A Blackburn, GCC (AB) and Cllr D Mossman, SDC (DM)	
1 Apologies	PC Manja Tunney	
2 Open Question Time	No parishioners were present.	
3 Police Report	<p>The following written Police report was sent to EPC prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Only one incident of a motorcycle theft occurred between 25th July – 25th September 2014. Police recovered the motorcycle within a couple of days. Police Advice. With the clocks changing soon, review your house security. If you are away, arrange for dusk to dawn lights to be on-possibly on a timer-making the house look occupied. Do not leave valuables on display. Make sure all doors and windows are locked when away or out. Make sure fences are in good order. Put away tools and garden furniture-these can aid entry.</p>	
4 Declaration of Member's Interest in Agenda items	There were no declarations made. AN reminded EPC that he works in planning for SDC.	
5 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5th June 2014	The minutes of the Elmore Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 5th June 2014 were proposed as a true record by AN and seconded by NM.	
6 Matters Arising	<p>Weir Green – more 'logs' have been added to the area. AN reported that the Green was recovering well</p> <p>Minutes of the last meeting had been sent to Cllrs AB and DM in draft format as well as being published on the EPC website.</p> <p>War Memorial Plaque is now in position. JF offered thanks to TJ for his work.</p> <p>The Bridge – the first edition of the new Elmore Quarterly Magazine was distributed in June.</p> <p>'Emergency Plan and Defibrillator' to appear later in these minutes.</p> <p>'Office consumables' was added as an item to the EPC spreadsheet.</p>	
7 County Councillor's Report	<p>Cllr Blackburn reported on several issues.</p> <p>Environment Agency - AB continues to be active reporting to and asking questions of meetings with GCC. JF questioned the assorted reports of allocation of funds for local flood defence work. There appears to be a lack of consistent forecasting of how much money for what was to be available and when.</p> <p>Fastershire broadband was discussed at GCC in September as well as at the meeting in Elmore in August.</p> <p>Roadworks - County councillors have an allowance of up to £20K for road repair. AB offered to help with Lake Street pothole repairs.</p> <p>Longney School have a vacancy for a school governor. AB offered to pass on names of nominees.</p> <p>JF asked for a progress report on the incinerator. AB stated that the decision regarding the Appeal had been delayed and was now expected from the Minister (Eric Pickles) by 30th November</p>	

	JF thanked AB for his report.	
8 District Councillor's Report	<p>JF thanked AB for his report.</p> <p>Clrr Mossman reported on several issues. Boundary Review- councillor numbers suggested by SDC council and suggestions by the conservative group put to commission may mean possible changes to Hardwicke Ward Boundaries and the number of ward councillors.</p> <p>DM reported on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Boundary Review and the possible changes in the Hardwicke Ward. No decision has yet been made. - Emerging Town Plan to 2013 and the Inspector's Report . Inspector has instructed SDC to review the forecast of house numbers as they are insufficient. - Possible house numbers in relation to new builds in Stroud District, including large scale developments west of Stonehouse. (Hunts Grove 1,750 house; Sellars Bridge 200; Mayo's Field 55.) - The waste treatment plant - still awaiting a final decision." <p>DM reported that he would be seeing NC (MP) and offered to pass any question from EPC to NC (MP). JF thanked DM for his report but agreed to send EPC questions directly to NC (MP).</p>	JF
9 Finance – Forecast expenditure	JF (Chair) referred to the forecast expenditure spreadsheet. Balance at the end of September 2014 is £5,150.26. Taking into account planned expenditure and the Clerk's salary not shown, the end of the financial year forecast should be in the region of £3,750. This is a healthy financial forecast.	
10 Severn Estuary Flood Risk (SEFRMS)	<p>Chairman's update as at 1st October 2014 (also published in The Bridge, October Ed)</p> <p>Little has changed since our last Newsletter. In the wake of the Somerset floods of last winter, extra funds have been allocated by the Government to the Environment Agency (EA) in order to improve flood defences and to continue maintenance of existing defences. The EA's Tewkesbury Office has recently published the figures for 'estimated' costs for either capital intervention or maintenance for various areas along the River Severn.</p> <p>Our local MP, Neil Carmichael, made a clear promise at eh meeting of the Severn Voice in March that not only had the sum of £274,000 has been allocated to cope with problems at Elmore and Longney, a further £1m was promised by the Government to address problems on both sides of the River Severn within Gloucestershire, Sadly, this seems to have been a empty promise as the total figure shown on this list of estimated costs for the whole of the lower Severn on both sides of the River is only £56,100 which amounts to just 20% of the figure promised for just Elmore and Longney.</p> <p>In some areas such as Lydney, Westbury, Rodley, Minsterworth, Stonebench (Weir Green), Upper Framilode and Arlingham the EA intend to "<i>maintain and sustain to keep pace with climate change</i>"; in other areas including Elmore Back, Longney and Slimbridge the EA's 'strategy' is to "<i>maintain into the medium-long term</i>". Most of the locations have specific funds allocated to but Elmore Back is the one of the three locations that does not! Furthermore, in Elmore Back's case the caveat of maintenance has '<i>/adaption</i>' added to it.</p>	

	<p>Across the River from Weir Green is Minsterworth Ham the EA's strategy there is to "...maintain as long as economical benefits outweigh cost...".</p> <p>Sadly, all the figures in the EA's schedule of works have rather too many unexplained caveats attached to them to make them meaningful. Such wording as "<i>subject to available funding</i>" gives little comfort or confidence that the strategies for expenditure related work will actually be translated into action.</p> <p>None of these strategies are explained so we can assume that the EA's policy, outlined in the Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy (SEFRMS) published last year for consultation, has not changed in the slightest.</p> <p>Therefore, we can also assume that the EA's long term intention for Elmore Back is to allow it to flood as sea levels rise and then create a wildlife habitat by 'adapting' the flood defences.</p> <p>The hype surrounding the high tides accompanying the Severn Bores in August and September did not produce any problems but those living adjacent to the River would be advised not only to keep an eye on the Severn Bore timetables for future years but also register with the EA in order to receive flood warnings.</p> <p>It was decided that the Chair should write to our MP to express dissatisfaction with the lack of allocation of any funding for Elmore's flood defences, with a copy to both TB and DM. Chair would also seek clarification from EA Tewkesbury (Jo Martin) regarding the recently published figures for maintenance along the Severn Estuary.</p>	
11 Broadband and Telephone lines update	<p><i>Chairman's report following the briefing by BT/Openreach and Fastershire on 29th August 2014.</i></p> <p>You may recall from previous newsletters that some years ago BT attempted to drill under the canal in order to lay additional telephone cables to both Elmore and Longney. Sadly this scheme failed after three attempts to drill, culminating in the loss of the drilling mole at a cost to BT of some £75k ☺. Not surprisingly this scheme was abandoned.</p> <p>However, your Parish Council has kept up the pressure on BT and Open Reach in order to improve the quality of both our telephone connections and Broadband speeds. The Government initiative to deliver faster broadband to rural areas has given our case added impetus.</p> <p>At the Severn Voice Meeting in May local councillors from nine parishes were given a briefing on the Fastershire scheme operating within Gloucestershire in order to deliver faster Broadband to the rural communities. Many questions remained unanswered so your Parish Council asked BT and Fastershire if a similar presentation could be given to a small group within just Elmore and Longney but focussing in the specific problems we face.</p> <p>On 29th August a strong team from BT and Fastershire gave a very detailed briefing to us on the technical problems they faced and their plans to overcome them. There is to be no miracle cure but the</p>	

	<p>prospects for the future do look very good.</p> <p>The Problems</p> <p>The Canal – only one telephone line exists from the Hardwicke Exchange to the distribution box on our side of the canal and this has a very limited capacity to carry telephone lines and broadband.</p> <p>The Cables – the cables are copper and in some areas, aluminium, cables are old and stretch a long way from both the Exchange and the distribution box.</p> <p>The Distance – signal degradation for broadband occurs when the distance from the exchange and/or distribution boxes exceeds 1km. This is the situation for Elmore as the distance from our distribution box to houses is at best 2kms and at worst 5km.</p> <p>The Solutions</p> <p>A new technology system. Fastershire will be installing a new system called Radio Backhaul. This involves firing a direct line of sight microwave signal from the Hardwicke Exchange to the distribution box on our side of the canal. This will entail erecting two new masts; one to fire the signal and the other to receive it. A new distribution box will also be installed adjacent to the existing box.</p> <p><u>Time Frame:</u> before the end of October 2014.</p> <p>Upgrading the existing cables. Openreach will carry out a survey of the existing ducting from the distribution box into Elmore and where possible install a fibre-optic cable – probably as far as the Village Hall. If this is not possible then the older copper cables will be replaced with new ones. This will also entail erecting some new relay boxes for the new cable. If the distance from the various distribution boxes to householders can be reduced to less than 1km then we should be able to receive broadband download speeds of +/- 24Mb/s.</p> <p><u>Time Frame:</u> over the next 18 months with the aim to have the system tested and functioning by the end of 2015.</p> <p>Going Live: Fastershire will inform us of when the system is fully operational. A higher broadband download speed won't necessarily be automatic for internet users as the ability to receive such a service will depend on what sort of contract householders have with their existing Internet Service Provider (ISP). There are currently over 80 ISPs in the UK, all of which offer a wide variety of services so the choice is quite staggering and can be confusing!</p> <p>What do we need to do?</p> <p>Once the new system is operational there will be no automatic upgrade for users. Therefore, it will be necessary for individual householders to organise the service they require with their current ISP or switch to another one offering a better deal. However, be wary of signing-up for a download speed that is not technically possible, i.e. don't sign-up for a 50Mb download speed when the fastest possible for you is only 24 Mb.</p> <p>This can be done in one of two ways;</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-register your requirement for an upgraded broadband service with your current ISP; e.g. BT Infinity, TalkTalk, Sky, Virgin etc - Once Fastershire has notified us that the new system is operational you can request an upgrade from our ISP. <p>If you want to keep up-to-date with developments regarding the installation you can register with Fastershire by visiting their website and logging on to the 'Keep me Posted' section: www.fastershire.com</p>	
12 Planning	No new applications have been recorded.	
13 Elmore Village Emergency Plan	<p>No further progress. JF (Chair) plans try to circulate the draft before the December meeting to all Cllrs.</p> <p>A Defibrillator is part of the plan. It was agreed that AN & TJ would get together to discuss options for the purchase, funding, location and training of its use. The aim being to make a firm decision at the next meeting.</p> <p>Discussion followed approaching M. Watts (Land Charity), Glos Charities Foundation, training for volunteers to help vulnerable members of our community.</p> <p>Money has already been voted over (£2k) This should be enough to include one defibrillator and the cabinet.</p> <p>It may work to buy one first and then a second for Elmore Back in due course.</p> <p>First Aid Training. JF (Chair) will arrange training through SDC once the route forward is agreed.</p> <p>It was agreed to advertise for volunteers in the next issue of The Bridge.</p>	All cllrs AN/ TJ JF
14 Any Other Business	EPC Website – JF (Chair) commented that the site was making excellent progress. Possible improvements would be to investigate whether a 'Record of hits' could be included in website. JH had managed to remove the many bloggers' comments on the website. The Bridge – the editorial policy has been recorded in previous minutes and will continue. The aim is to complement our Website and continue as a secular magazine designed to reinforce local issues and invite content from all areas of the Parish. Contributions from the Church would be welcome. For example, information regarding the proposed toilet at the Church, the state of the graveyard and even a financial statement telling everyone what contributions have been made to the Diocese.	JH
15. Date of next meeting and 2015 meetings	<p>The date of the next meeting is Thursday 11th December 2014.</p> <p>Meeting dates 2015</p> <p>Monday 2 March '15</p> <p>Tuesday 19th May '15 Annual Meetings</p> <p>Monday 28 Sept '15</p> <p>Monday 14th Dec '15</p>	
	There being no further business the meeting closed at 9 pm.	
	Signed Date.....	