

**Minutes of the Elmore Annual Parish Meeting
held at Elmore Village Hall on Tuesday 16th May 2017 at 7.45 pm**

Present	Parish Councillors Mr J Field (JF) Chair, Mrs J Hobbs (JH), Mr T Jones (TJ), Mrs P Turner (PT), Clerk Mrs D Jones	
In Attendance	Clare and Nick Stewart. Huw and Sally Annett	
1 Apologies	Cllr N Meek, Cllr D Mossman, Cllr G Oxley	
2 Police Report	No report received. Looking back over the year there were 4 burglaries within a 3 month period which caused a measure of anxiety within the village. We published guidance in The Bridge regarding preventative measures that could be taken.	

3 Chairman's Annual Statement at the Annual Parish Meeting 16th May 2017

Finance: The Elmore Account has remained healthy throughout this last FY and the balance at 31st March stood at £6,278.32 but when the contingency commitments are taken into account we have some ££4,618 available with no major projects planned as yet for this FY. Although some ideas are under consideration.

Verge Cutting: This year GCC's Highways Authority has agreed that Parish Councils within Severn Voice can run their own grass cutting contracts and be paid by GCC as though we were the main contractor like Amey. Therefore, we have, along with the other Severn Voice Parishes, opted to participate in this scheme for a one year trial period and if it is successful the contract will roll over. GCC only required their contractor (Amey) to do one cut of the verges and two cuts of the splays for visibility and safety. We will now be getting two cuts of the verges and three cuts of the splays. You may have noticed that our verges have recently been cut as part of this contract, if there are any views or complaints about the way they have been cut please pass your comments to myself or The Clerk.

Broadband: In August of 2014 BT promised to deliver super-fast broadband to Elmore via their cutting edge technology using a microwave signal to fire broadband across the canal. Sadly, we have waited in vain for nearly 3 years for BT to provide a viable broadband service into Elmore and they have steadfastly been dragging their heels; indeed, they have pointedly refused to connect us to the new Back Haul system they claimed would be the answer to our dreams.

Fastershire, which is a joint venture by Gloucestershire and Herefordshire County Councils, has also been frustrated by BT's unwillingness to deliver faster broadband to isolated villages and settlements, so last year they signed a contract with a different company, Gigaclear, to deliver ultra-fast broadband to many Cotswolds villages. Based on the success if this project Fastershire has entered into a new contract with Gigaclear to provide ultra-fast broadband to the remaining isolated areas in Gloucestershire, including Elmore.

This new GCC contract with Gigaclear, worth over £10m, has now been signed. The full details of the new contract haven't been published yet and we await the schedule of the roll-out. We are in area 3E and we are hopeful that we will be included in the early stages of scheme.

Gigaclear intend to lay a new fibre-optic cable, totally independent of BT's system, to deliver ultra-fast broadband speeds to the whole village of up to 50Mbps. Previously our telephone lines in the main part of Elmore came from the Hardwicke Exchange while the houses at Elmore Back were connected to the Minsterworth Exchange. This new Gigaclear system will be connected to what is termed the 'Dark Fibre Network' which runs throughout the UK and will include the whole village. Regardless of take-up by residents the fibre-optic cable will be laid throughout the village but this will be invasive, as a new trench needs to be dug thus causing some measure of disruption. Terminals will be placed outside every house and only connected once the residents have

signed-up with Gigaclear.

Costs: We have been told that the cost per household will be in the region of £40 per month for the basic tariff with an additional one-off connection fee of £100. There is no compulsion to sign-up to have the fibre-optic cable connected so don't feel pressurised. However, it should be noted that Gigaclear have a reputation for 'hard-selling' and are likely to send out representatives to knock on doors to gain customers. Individuals can register their interest online (without commitment) at the Gigaclear website: www.gigaclear.com

Current telephone contracts: Residents should be mindful of their existing contracts with whoever is their current 'In-Service Provider' (ISP). Bearing in mind that the Gigaclear system is totally independent of the existing telephone lines operated by OpenReach and BT it may be necessary to continue to run two contracts side by side until one expires.

Sky TV etc. It is not clear yet whether the Gigaclear fibre-optic cable will carry Sky TV or similar products so relevant questions need to be asked when the Gigaclear representative knocks on your door.

Timescale: we have been informed that Gigaclear will commence the work in June/July but as the schedule hasn't yet been published we have no idea when we will see them in our area. We will keep you informed of if we hear of any progress.

New rubbish scheme: Stroud District Council introduced a new rubbish collection scheme last year and, after a few minor teething problems, this seems to be working well and has exceeded all expectations with over 500 tons of food waste being collected each month while the amount of rubbish going to land fill has halved and is already at a level which is half of target set for 2020.

Parish Councillors:

It is important for the village to maintain its own governance but this cannot be done if we do not have enough Councillors. Last year I highlighted the problem that both several Councillors wished to retire and would like to hand over the reins to younger candidates.

I also put a notice in The Bridge indicating that if we don't get enough volunteers then it may well be necessary to amalgamate with our neighbouring village of Longney.

We can accept new Councillors at any stage in the year by co-opting them and do not have to wait for the next election in 2020. So, if you are interested please contact either The Clerk or myself.

4 Open Question Time	Question re verge cutting scheme. Huw Annett asked how it was possible for the Parish to make a 'profit' from the new verge cutting schemes with more cuts being done. JF replied that cutting out the middle men in the contract process can achieve this. Questions re Broadband/Gigaclear. Clare Stewart asked if the cost would depend on take up. JF replied that cables will be laid regardless of take up. Huw asked if the £100 connection fee covers fibre laid to the house. JF replied that he believed so. Questions re Incinerator. Huw asked if the Incinerator would burn land fill. JF replied that he did not think so, but was not certain.	
5 Declaration of Members' Interest in Agenda Items	Nothing was declared by the Councillors.	
6 Minutes of the previous	The Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting on 17 th May 2016 were proposed as a true record by TJ Seconded by PT.	

Annual Parish Meeting		
7Matters Arising	Matters arising from the Minutes of 17 th May 2016 Action has been taken on all matters from the previous Annual Meeting.	
8Finance	<p>i)Review of Parish Precept for 2017/18. We increased the Parish Precept by 3% this year but I note that it coincided with respective increases in both Stroud District Council's levy and increases in the GCC levy. It should also be noted that although we only asked for an increase of 3% for Elmore, the figures shown in the SDC Council Tax Bill state that it is 7% - this is because the circumstances for more individuals in the village have changed which means they pay less Council Tax or where a property is now vacant, none at all. By the end of this FY we will have a clearer idea of where we stand financially and when we review the Precept prior to bidding for next year's allocation, we may even be able to reduce it, especially as we are likely to have additional funds from the grass cutting contract which were not evident when we set the figure for this FY.</p> <p>ii) Account and Audit :The accounts will be posted on the notice board in accordance with the Transparency Rules. The Council check and sign both the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual accounting Statement during the Parish Council Meeting which follows this meeting.</p> <p>iii)Forecast Expenditure for 2017/18: There are no major projects forecast for this FY but our on-going costs and standing orders will amount to some £1,572. The only change currently forecast to our financial activity is the grass verge cutting contract which will run as a trial for one year and if successful, roll-over to subsequent years.</p>	
9 County Councillor's Report	Change of County Councillor following the recent local elections. The newly elected Cllr is Cllr Stephen Davies (C) in place of Cllr Tony Blackburn The Conservatives now have 31 seats, an increase of some 7 seats which now gives them a majority. We do not have a report from our new County Councillor and look forward to meeting him in due course.	
10 District Councillor's Report	Cllr D Mossman and Cllr Gill Oxley were unable to attend as they had other meeting to attend.. Cllr Oxley said that there is very little to report at the moment as the Cllrs are in 'Purdah' awaiting the General Election. The Local election did not change the political balance in Stroud which still has a coalition of Labour, Liberals and Greens leading the Council.	
11 Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verges cutting contract. This was covered the Chairman's Annual Statement • Fly-tipping – we seem to have had less fly-tipping this year than in previous years but it is still a nuisance. EPC has bought CCTV cameras and signs to deter fly tipping. • Sellars Bridge – TJ presented a draft letter to GCC proposing a change of traffic priority on Sellars Bridge from the current westwards going priority to a eastward priority. The meeting approved the letter and JF supported this plan and agreed to talk to Hardwick and Longney Parish Council before sending a letter. 	TJ/JF
12 Elmore Emergency Plan update	VETS: NM has research a range of apps for mobile phones. Use of these would enable an automatic call to be made to neighbours. He is testing these. TJ recommended setting up neighbour to neighbour contact schemes. It was suggested that we design a card for parishioners to fill in with neighbours for	NM

	<p>easy use at home.</p> <p>First Aid training is planned for Elmore residents who wish to take part. This would include training in the use of defibrillators. TJ agreed to follow this up with SDC, Red cross and other organisations. JF proposed to allocate funds from the budget to pay for this.</p>	TJ
13 Broadband and Telephone Update	This was covered in the Chairman's Annual Statement.	
14 Elmore Emergency Plan update	This Emergency Plan will remain a living document, which will be reviewed annually.	
15 Parish Communicati ons	<p><u>Website:</u> It was reported that the Website was working well but that more photographs were needed to show the views of Elmore. It was noted that we have not received an invoice for the web hosting fee of £60 a year. DJ agreed to follow this up.</p> <p><u>The Bridge:</u> The 12th issue is about to be published. Suggestion made that simple instruction on the use of defibrillators should be published in a subsequent issue. Also that EPC could fund the production of a card to be distributed with The Bridge on which parishioners could record contact details of neighbours and friends who would help them in a medical emergency.</p> <p><u>E-mail</u> It was agreed that we would not pursue the idea of running a competition to attract more email contacts.</p>	DJ TJ
15 Any Other Business	No other business	
16 Date of next Annual Parish Meeting	To be held during May 2018	
	The Chairman thanked those present for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.25 pm.	
	SignedDate	