

**Minutes of the Elmore Annual Parish Meeting
held at Elmore Village Hall on Tuesday 15th May 2018 at 7.45 pm**

Present	Parish Councillors Mr J Field (JF) Chair, M N Meek (V Chair), Mr T Jones (TJ), Mrs P Turner (PT), Mrs J Hill (JH) Clerk Mrs D Jones	
In Attendance	Colin Ellis	
1 Apologies	Cllr G Oxley and Cllr S Davies	
2 Police Report	No report received	

3 Chairman's Annual Statement at the Annual Parish Meeting 15th May 2018

Finance

Account Balance: Once again I can report a healthy state of affairs regarding our finances. We ended the last FY with a balance of £5,968 in the bank. Looking at our Financial Forecast, and taking into account the planned income and expenditure, the balance at the end of this FY will be much the same. Credit for this should go to our Clerk, Dorie Jones who has managed to locate and secure various grants to alleviate our expenditure.

Audit: Our internal audit has been conducted successfully. We have observed 'due diligence' concerning our accounts by reviewing the balance and expenditure at every meeting over the last 12 months. The final accounts will be posted on the website in accordance with the Transparency rules.

Precept: Last year we decided to raise the Precept by 3% , having not had any increase for the previous 6 years during the recession – on average this made a small difference of around 30p per household. Although it is not our intention to increase the precept in line with inflation, we will keep the matter under review.

Projects: Our expenditure has been focused on Community Based Projects - for example:

- 1st Aid Training
- Verge cutting
- Defibrillator maintenance

This trend is likely to continue to benefit the community.

Security and Crime

Sadly, since the last Annual Meeting in May 2017 there have been a series of thefts and burglaries within the Parish.

Last year I reported that there had been 4 burglaries within a 4 month period – in the last 12 months there have been a further 8 burglaries and thefts. Notably the theft of lead from the Church roof, which also caused considerable structural damage, costing some £10,000 to repair.

There seems to be a pattern regarding these thefts – sometimes a car or an unmarked white van is seen cruising around the area and even seen entering farmyards - if challenged they make some feeble excuse about looking for a colleague they thought was there! It is significant that many of these vehicles have either Irish number plates or eastern European plates such as Romanian.

I have tried to keep residents in the picture as events occur by e-mailing those for whom I have contact addresses. The exchange of information is vital for all our security, no matter how trivial you may think it might be. I will continue to use the database for the passage of vital information.

The lack of a Police presence in rural areas, triggered by their own reducing budget, has meant that individuals need to be more vigilant and take sensible precautions to alleviate the danger. Over the last year I have put notices in the parish magazine, The Bridge, regarding what can be done. Our local PCSO has promised to increase patrols in the area but these have been few and far between.

The Gloucestershire Police Authority has also re-opened Quedgeley Police Station. Previously our nearest contact was the Barton Street Station.

Broadband

It would be fair to say that I have struggled to get straight answers from Fastershire and GCC regarding the installation of the new fibre throughout Elmore.

The latest information I have is that drilling under the River Severn was due to take place in February but we are still awaiting an actual start date for the work. The Fastershire website states that work is due to start on the Elmore/Longney project in June 2018 – but seeing is believing.

I have been reliably informed that the fibre connections will be activated as they are laid and Gigaclear will not wait until the whole project is complete.

The cost of installation for householders is causing me some concern as I estimate that the average household may have to pay up to £500 to get the fibre connected in their houses by Gigaclear. Those properties with longer drives, or special requirements, may have to pay a lot more.

What is not clear at the moment is whether or not we can contract another ISP to connect ourselves to the fibre rather than use Gigaclear’s services. e.g. Sky.

Parish Councillors – Elections in 2020.

The next Parish Council election is due to take place in May 2020. Bearing in mind that both Councillor Trevor Jones and myself, as Chair, are planning to retire then, we would like possible candidates to express some interest. Sadly, the lack of interest in Parish Council matters is evident from the audience at this Annual Meeting – with only one attendee.

We will keep the future of your Parish Council under constant review, including exploring the option for amalgamation with a neighbouring parish.

John Field, May 2018

4 Open Question Time	Colin asked if we should be considering alternative approaches to wire/fibre with perhaps 4G to solve the broadband problem. JF said that BT SW quoted £50K for us to bring our own fibre from the ‘box’ to Elmore. JF thought that a ‘mobile pole’ cost may be similar. Mobile signals are said to be improving and we could keep and explore this option.	
5 Declaration of Members’ Interest in	Nothing was declared by the Councillors.	

Agenda Items		
6 Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting	The Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting on 16 th May 2017 were proposed as a true record by TJ and seconded by PT.	
7Matters Arising	Matters arising from the Minutes of 16 th May 2017 Action has been taken on all matters since the previous Annual Meeting. This has been dealt with in the course of normal business at Meetings.	
8Finance	<p>Finance:</p> <p>Review of Parish Precept for 2018/19. During the Chair’s Annual Statement he mentioned that we had increased the Precept by 3% last year but no further increase has been made. The burning question is: should we have an annual increase in line with inflation, leave it as it is or even reduce it?</p> <p>Account and Audit</p> <p>JF reported that the account is very healthy. Mainly good husbandry and sensible spending. He commended the Clerk who has found grants from other sources as well as reclaiming our VAT on expenditure.</p> <p>Forecast Expenditure for 2018/19</p> <p>There is one major item of expenditure for this FY and that is new security doors for the Village Hall. We will continue with the verge cutting contract and although this incurs expenditure throughout the year, we reclaim it from GCC.</p> <p>Community based projects</p> <p>JF reported that we have been considering the sort of project that would be best suited to both the amount of money we have available and the sort of thing we would like to spend it on. We have overwhelmingly decided that community based projects are the way ahead – that is, projects that will be of direct benefit to the village. We don’t give donations to charities nor do we give donations to political parties.</p>	
9 County Councillor’s Report	<p>Cllr Stephen Davies reported</p> <p>“It has now been a year since I was elected as your County Councillor. It has flown by and I feel that it has been a steep learning curve but now feel that I understand my role and how to get things done. One task I have is the distribution of the £30,000 “Growing Communities” fund. If you have any schemes that you would like considered for this please let me know.</p> <p>There is a Full Council meeting on 16th May where we will elect a new Chairman of the Council as well as members for each of the Committees. I expect to continue on the Economic Scrutiny Committee and Children and Families Scrutiny Committee. The latter has been very involved in the actions resulting from the Inadequate Ofsted rating last year. There are some signs of improvement but this will remain a major challenge and take time to get right, but there is real determination to achieve this.</p>	
10 District Councillor’s Report	Cllr Gill Oxley were unable to attend as they had other meeting to attend. JF read the written statement: Cllr Oxley’s report was	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. £1.6 million of capital funding be allocated to delivering infrastructure at, and redevelopment of Brimscombe Port, Thrupp. 2. 1 in 4 people experience mental health illness in any given year. SDC signed the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge and resolved to appoint two elected members as Mental Health Champions. There are other initiatives including, tackling discrimination, including working to reduce inequalities, supporting positive mental health in the community, including schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces, and each committee to look at their current and future work programmes to assess how their initiatives and standard operations affect the mental health and well being of residents, members and staff. 3. The Council to become 'single use plastic free' authority by eliminating single use plastic at all SDC facilities by 2020 and from the Council supply chain by 2025. 4. David Hagg Chief Executive of SDC to retire October 2018. Plans are underway to start the recruitment process for a new Chief Exec. 	
11 Highways	<p>Verge cutting contract. Last FY we entered into a contract with GCC and took on the responsibility for verge cutting within the Parish boundaries. This contract was a resounding success and we doubled the number of cuts that Amey previously did and achieved a better level of service from our contractor. As a result we will continue with this contract for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Fly-tipping Sadly we have had a steady level of fly-tipping throughout the year with some instances being quite amazing. We've had an excellent service from SDC who have collected all the reported rubbish with a few days of reporting.</p> <p>Sellars Bridge Parking The plan to paint yellow lines on either side of Sellars Bridge still seems to be on the cards – however, we still feel that unless it is enforced there will be little improvement to the traffic flow.</p>	
12 Elmore Emergency Plan update	Our Emergency Plan remains in force and part of this has been the first aid training held within the village. The first session was excellent and well attended.	
13 Broadband and Telephone Update	This was covered in the Chair's Annual Statement	
14 Parish Communications	<p><u>Website</u>: growing bit by bit and contains some very useful info – thanks to the Clerk for keeping it up to date. All Minutes of our meetings are published on the website as well as our Parish Finances and any receipts for £100 or more that the Council authorises.</p> <p><u>The Bridge</u>: This is a very successful parish magazine, now in its 4th year. The idea of a colour issue was considered. However, adding any colour would make it 4 times as expensive as in black and white.</p>	

	<p><u>E-mail</u> Our database has been well used this last year, mainly on security issues and we believe it is an essential part of our communication strategy and wish to continue using it. We need to follow the guidelines for the latest Government regulations regarding GDPR – to this end the council will be considering a Policy document during the meeting that follows this one. JF reminded the meeting that only he and the Clerk have access to this email list.</p>	
15 Planning Review and Update	<p>Planning – Review/Update The Council will be reviewing all the applications from 2017 during the meeting that follows this one. Suffice to say we haven't had any contentious issues and we receive a good service from SDC.</p>	
16 Any Other Business	No other Business.	
17 Date of next Annual Parish Meeting	To be held during May 2019	
	The Chairman thanked those present for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.45 pm.	
	SignedDate	