

MINSTERWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

www.minsterworthparishcouncil.org.uk

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MINSTERWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday, 9 April 2019, in Minsterworth Village Hall.

PRESENT:

Councillors - Roger Blowey - Chairman
Rod Crisp
N Garbutt
S Ingham
S King
Cathy Thomas
County Councillor Awford
Mrs F Wallbank – Clerk

Parishioners: 32

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Apologies: Borough Councillor Davies.

The Chairman wanted to record the Parish Councils thanks to BC Davies for his 32 dedicated service to Minsterworth.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday, 8 April 2018 – Signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising from the minutes:

Mains Sewer: Mr Selwyn again raised the issue of having mains drainage in the Village especially with all the new development happening in Minsterworth. The Chairman reiterated what he reported at last year's meeting. Severn Trent have no plans to put in a main sewer despite all the additional housing.

Play Area: The Chairman reported that the Parish Council had signed a lease with Gloucestershire County Council taking over the responsibility of the Play Area. This area is now up and running with the grass being cut on a regular basis and the whole area being kept tidy. There is a swing in place however not yet available for use. Looking at calling the area "Minsterworth Park".

Calcott Green Signs still needs amending.

The Chairman gave the following updates regarding his Annual Report:

Affordable Housing all complete and the bench in memory of Richard Few has now been put in place. The official opening of the housing by HRH Princess Anne will be on Tuesday, 9 April 2019.

The Villager wanted to personally thank Paula Ruffley for all her dedicated hard work as Editor of The Villager.

4. Phil Awford, County Councillor: As his report had been circulated with the agenda, he would take it as read. He was really pleased that the A48 was completed 1 year earlier than the 3-year programme. If the Parish Council had any projects to be considered for his Growing Communities grant of £10k then they should submit these as soon as possible.

Q Why was he not standing for the Borough elections?

A there were others not present in a better position to answer the question.

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Councillor Thomas wanted to thank CC Awford for all this dedicated hard work to Minsterworth and its parishioners and all present were in full agreement. Cllr Awford will continue attending PC meetings as the County Councillor

5. Derek Davies, Borough Councillor: Not present

6. Matters Raised by Electors:

Church Lane & Bury Lane: The surfaces of these roads are terrible with major potholes remaining unfilled. Cllr Blowey reported that he had taken Craig Freeman of Highways to Bury Lane and shown him the condition of the lane and some potholes had been repaired. CC Awford said he would take this up with Highways. Ringway is the new contractor dealing with Highway resurfacing works.

RBL Trip to the Black Country Living Museum in September.

Broadband: Is making slow progress with cabling being installed however completion date could be March 2020. It is currently proposed that the cable will cross the river at Rodley.

Future Development: Why is TBC in favour of ribbon development rather than clusters of houses, maybe 2 or 3 rows deep running back from the A48, as is currently present on the south side of the A48, as this would leave green spaces along the village? The Chairman explained that the Parish Council had been in dialogue with TBC and met with their officers, but TBC are not in favour of development away from the main road. The PC was waiting for the results of the JCS to be released to see the final delineation of the proposed settlement boundary for Minsterworth

Footpaths: These need to be far more accessible for all age groups. Currently the footpath along the river has stiles and gates that are chained shut, and some styles that are too high for walkers to climb over. It was suggested that styles should be replaced with kissing gates for easier access. In addition, in one instance when the hedgerow was cut, large branches were left on the footpaths.

The Chairman agreed with this however some walkers are not considerate about the livestock in the field and leave gates open. Cllr King reported that the EA are responsible for the gates that are chained. If footpaths are blocked by branches this should be reported at the time to GCC PROW.

7. Close of Meeting – The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.03pm.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Roger Blowey

Looking at the chairman's report for last year, I see that I was unable to mention the visit of HRH Princess Anne who was to officially open Ellis Bank the day after our 2019 Parish Assembly meeting. Although this was for security reasons, I still found it a shame that we were not permitted to have people lining the road when she arrived, so I was delighted when a few turned up, and even more delighted that Lorna and Archie had picked a bouquet of wild flowers which HRH graciously accepted. Overall it was a good day, and it was nice to find how relaxed HRH was meeting everyone in the Village Hall, and her genuine interest in things like the new kitchen, which was completed the day before her visit!

For a second-year planning has been a big part of Parish Council business. We agreed on a 'settlement boundary' for the village, this being an area of Minsterworth within which planning permission for further development is more likely to be granted. The boundary can be viewed on the TBC website. As a Parish Council we were keen to avoid a continuous single 'ribbon' development all along the A48, thinking that it would be better to build back further away from the road in some areas, and leave open spaces in others. This has had limited support from TBC, and the 'ribbon' is unfortunately expanding. We have also found that the settlement boundary does not have as much power as we expected. Because TBC do not have their full quota of housing supply land for the next 5 years, we have had areas of land outside of the settlement boundary where developers have successfully won 'permission in principle' on appeal. The other interesting feature of planning is that it has been decided that the soil type in Minsterworth is not suitable for soak away systems (I think many of us knew that already!), and this will not be allowed for future developments. I'm afraid I don't know enough about the history of the village to know why a mains sewer was not installed years ago. It certainly has been a subject discussed fairly recently, but when we asked the Village how many people would be prepared to pay the connection costs if a Severn Trent system was installed, we received a very disappointing response. Broad band has been taken through the village and as far as we can tell it is ready for connection, with some houses already connected. Exactly why only a few have been connected remains a mystery. It would be nice if the weather would dry up a bit to allow the grass verges to recover from their onslaught! The playground was well used during the year, and the Parish Council pay for the grass cutting to make this a pleasant facility for the village. The leaking pipe has been mended, the wet area of brambles and nettles has been reseeded, and a new fence erected in one area, making the whole park look much more appealing. Options for the future of the school building continue to be explored, and we are grateful for the small group who are putting so much effort into this.

With so much wet weather in February (the wettest February since records began!) we were lucky not to have had more serious flooding. The water came up very close to some of our houses, but did not quite get in. It does show how important a drainage system is however, and we would ask everyone who has drains on their own land to do their best to keep them clean and flowing.

The traffic on the A48 remains a problem in the mornings, and we have been unsuccessful in our efforts to reduce speeding and traffic flow along Calcotts Green in the mornings. This year has possibly been worse with the A417 Maismore road closed for several weeks due to flooding. The extra lane at the Over Roundabout seemed to work well for a while, but there is now such a big queue trying to get onto the Northern Bypass in the mornings, it seriously slows traffic. With very large numbers of houses being built in Lydney, Coleford, Cinderford and other areas, I can only see the situation getting worse unless some radical action is taken. Our one bit of 'good news' with regards to Highways is that the footpath has been resurfaced near to Downs Bridge, and overall the footpath/cycle path is well used. We would be grateful if Landowners would make sure that their hedges are well cut back to keep the path free of brambles and bushes.

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Many thanks to all who actively contribute to village life. It makes the efforts of the Parish Council much more rewarding. Thanks to everyone who planted daffodils and other flowers outside of their houses and along grass verges (although we did have a motorist stop on the verge and pick some of the daffodils in February!!). Thanks to those who continue to go out on a regular basis and do a litter pick. Without them the village would be a mess. Thanks to Paula for her continued efforts with The Villager Magazine, and for continuing our internal email system for notice of village events. If you are not on Mailchimp, please let me or Paula know. Thanks to Sarah for setting up Minsterworth Matters on Facebook.

Finally, I would once again like to thank all my fellow Parish Councillors, Tewkesbury Borough and County Councillors and especially Fiona, for guidance and support. Thanks to the Parishioners who attend PC meetings. We have had some good numbers again this year. It's your Village – we value your comments and support.

Roger Blowey

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Phil Awford

I have pleasure in making this report as your County Councillor:

- Firstly, after much public interest and following many years of waiting the Javelin Park waste treatment plant is built, tested and now operational
- The County Council has determined its budget for this financial year in line with the consultation process and a few small amendments.
- The focus is on our vulnerable adults and you people together with the ongoing commitment to improving our highways
- As a County Councillor I do get a slight increase in my Highways Local Budget of £5k to take it up to £25k across the Division
- The Division now covers 21 Parishes so clearly it has to be spent in the most effective way. Much of this is committed to some long-awaited projects
- My roles include Environment Scrutiny, Adult Social Care and County Planning
- I also continue to represent the County on both the Severn and Wye Regional Flood Defence Committee and the Wessex RFDC
- There is a consultation currently being undertaken on the Estuary and future planning allowing for increasing levels up to the end of the Century
- Obviously, storms and flooding have dominated my work in recent months

I work closely with the TBC Officers and Flood Warden Network and would pay tribute to their commitment to our communities

It is a pleasure to work with the Parish Council and I thank you all together with your Clerk for all the support I receive

Phil Awford

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Flood and Snow Warden Report Councillor Cathy Thomas

As Storm Ciara blew outside, I sat at the computer, thinking we have had no Snow and no flooding..... what a difference a week makes..... Storm Dennis followed (both in February) Minsterworth then suffered the aftermath of these storms, which shed much heavier rain in Wales and upriver of us.

So, our flood plain of Minsterworth Hams, worked as it should, filling slowly as water broke through the bank in the Over area. The Resilience group were in regular contact regarding river levels, flood levels, farm evacuations of animals and houses where possible flooding could occur. We delivered sandbags to those who may be vulnerable, should the riverbank give. I was in frequent contact with Cllr Phil Awford and the Flood duty team at TBC.

This was a different flood situation than we have seen for quite a while, so was rather difficult to anticipate how things would pan out. In the event Minsterworth were really lucky, the flood plain had a way to go before the lower lying properties were near flooding. The tides were thankfully dropping off by the time the flood water was on its way down stream.

Minsterworth may not have suffered from houses flooding, but with A.40 flooded from Highnam along to Over, The A.40 to Ross suffering serious flooding, Two mile lane being under water and the A417 to Maisemore closed, also under water, navigating was not easy! Not helped by extra traffic 'taking a short cut' along the lower lane at some high speeds, hoping to 'jump the que' on the A.48

As for Snow, February saw snow in the county, we may have had 20 flakes.....blink and you missed it!

We sincerely hope that March brings some good weather, with little or no snow or flood problems. Should you have any issues concerning Flood or Snow, please do not hesitate to contact me on: 07546497203

Ham & Calcotts Green Report Councillor Cathy Thomas

Calcotts Green suffered some digging up, in the Autumn, when Fastershire made its way through the Village, but made a fair recovery. The snowdrops made a lovely show between the 'marker' posts. The ditch around the Green was cleared of brash etc, aiding drainage. It is sad to see the edges of the Green being churned up, by cars using the lower lane as a 'rat run'.

Ham green remains a haven for wildlife, with a huge variety of birdlife and with flooding, this year, Canada Geese, Ducks & Swans have visited!

The Parish Council are grateful to all who help in any way to keep our greens safe & tidy for all to enjoy.

PAROCHIAL CHARITIES

Minsterworth has two long established charities, the John Hiett Charity dating from 1719, was established to provide tools for children under 25 to improve prospects for work, and the Joseph Wintle Charity, dating from 1722, provides a coal allowance for heating for the needy in the village. With current low interest rates, the income from both charities is very low, and the trustees decided that they would allow funds to accumulate a little so that when a grant was made, it was a meaningful sum. Hence no awards were made this year, but we hope we will have sufficient funds to do so next year.