

Minutes of Upleadon Parish Council Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 05 May 2022 at Upleadon Village Hall at 8.15 pm

Present: Cllr M Manning (Chairman) Cllr Mrs P Turner, Cllr Mrs W Fabian, Cllr Mrs Cooke, Cllr P Dallow, Cllr E Wood, Cllr H Dunn

Also present: District Cllr P Burford, County Cllr Mrs G Moseley

Apologies: - None

There were no Members of the Parish present

1. Approval of Minutes of Annual Assembly meeting – 05 May 2021

Cllr Mrs Turner proposed approval of the Minutes of the Annual Assembly meeting of 05 May 2021 which was seconded by Cllr Mrs Fabian and unanimously agreed.

2. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising

3. To receive report from Parish Council Chairman

The outgoing Chairman – Cllr Dunn gave a short report on the Council's activities during the past financial year, including the refurbishment of the footpath running between Gloucester Road and Forge Lane. This had been possible due to the help of Public Rights of Way Officer – Suzanne Hopes and County Cllr Mrs Gill Moseley, both of whom had generously contributed to the project. The refurbished path has subsequently been dedicated to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Council had also initiated and supplied a Highway mirror on Upleadon Cross to aid visibility to motorists/pedestrians from Eden's Hill direction. Cllr Dunn thanked the Clerk together with Cllrs Burford and Mrs Moseley for their help and guidance during the past year.

4. To receive report from District Councillor Philip Burford

Cllr Burford advised it had been a challenging year, and the Council had been behind with its work due to Covid-19. A £20M cash injection had been given by Central Government. £9.5M to go to redevelop Five Acres Leisure Centre and £.5M to Cinderford Town Centre regeneration, £10M to a new Resource Centre at Hartpury. Focus had been made on projects rather than statutory duties. A big drive had been undertaken to do green projects and solar panels had been put on the District Council Offices. The Local Plan is being worked on – the preferred Option was a single settlement and limited growth in the four market towns. It is very likely the preferred option may change. There are now five solar farms between Hartpury and Upleadon and there is currently two live planning applications for Solar farms – at Rudford and Moat Farm. Cllr Mrs Moseley added that there was no strategy with reference to Solar farms and currently they have to look at them individually.

5. To receive report from County Councillor Mrs Gill Moseley

Cllr Mrs Moseley gave a written report – see attached.

6. To receive questions from the public regarding the Council's activities during the financial year 2021/22 and any issues relating to parish matters

There were no members of the public present.

In the absence of any further business the meeting was declared closed at 8.45 pm

County Councillor Report May 2022

Newent Division - Upleadon Parish

Gloucestershire County Council elections, May 2021:

- Last May all 53 County Council seats were up for election
- The Conservatives were returned as the administration, albeit with a reduced majority (a majority of 3 compared to 9 in 2017)
- The full results were as follows:
 - Conservatives: 28 (-3)
 - Liberal Democrats: 16 (+2)
 - Labour/Labour & Co-operative: 5 (no change)
 - Green Party: 4 (+2)
 - Independents: 0 (-1)

Full Council Meetings

- Since May 2021 there have been five Full Council meetings, including the Budget meeting in February 2022.
- At Full Council meetings, all parties are given the opportunity to introduce “motions” to be debated – though these are predominantly given over to ‘opposition’ parties.
- Just some of the key issues debated include:
 - June 2021: A Liberal Democrat motion calling for 20mph maximum speeds to be introduced in areas where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix
 - This has resulted in the matter being debated a number of times at Environment Scrutiny, with Councillors waiting to see a revised 20mph policy from GCC officers
 - June 2021: A Liberal Democrat motion calling for this Council to reject the proposed Voter ID reforms
 - This motion was voted down by the administration and not adopted.
 - September 2021: A Liberal Democrat motion calling for the Government’s Planning White Paper to be scrapped.
 - An amended version of this motion was agreed by all parties, and the Council Leader subsequently wrote to the Government outlining the Council’s concerns over the reforms
 - September 2021: A Liberal Democrat motion calling for the Council to tackle poverty and deprivation in Gloucestershire

- An amended version of this motion was agreed by all parties, and the inaugural “Levelling Up Our Communities” conference has been organised for 19 May as a result.
- February 2022 – Budget meeting.
 - Full Council approved a budget of £521m for 22/23 – an increase of £38million on 21/22 (£483)
 - £10.2 of this increase came from the 1.99 per cent increase in council tax, and a further £3.7 million from the social care precept on households (equating to £42 per Band D household per year).
 - Some budget highlights include: £150m for school buildings, £100m for highways, £20m for cycle routes, £14m additional investment in children’s services, £9m to support adults living with a disability and £1m for measures to tackle the climate emergency.
- February 2022 – The following amendments were accepted to the budget:
 - Liberal Democrats: An additional £250,000 to progress 20mph schemes, £100,000 for a Traffic Regulation Order reserve specifically for road safety schemes and £33,000 to scrap the proposed increase to residential parking permits.
 - Green Party: £120,000 to establish a recycling shop pilot at one of the county’s recycling centres and £45,000 to pay for a biodiversity management officer.
 - Labour Party: no accepted amendments.
- March 2022: A joint motion outlining Gloucestershire County Council’s support for the Ukraine in the face of the illegal invasion by Russian forces.
 - Supported by all councillors, the resolution included the commitment to support all refugees arriving in Gloucestershire.
- March 2022: A Liberal Democrat motion on policing and anti-social behaviour, noting the Police and Crime Commissioner’s abandonment of his commitment to employ an additional 300 police officers during his first term in office.
 - An amended version of the motion passed and the PCC has subsequently been invited to provide a presentation to Full Council on how he intends to deliver on his manifesto commitments.

Significant GCC announcements 21/22

- June - £620,000 approved for 500 double charging points around the county – with the first 25 meant to have been installed in Gloucester and Cheltenham in 21/22 (though, it is not believed that this has happened yet).
- June – approval of pilot schemes for on demand bus services in The Forest of Dean and The Cotswolds following a successful bid to the DfT’s Transport Rural Mobility Fund (securing £1.352 million), due to start Spring 2022, although it is not believed that these have started yet.

- July - £2m community recovery fund launched (Build Back Better Fund), with each councillor allocated £40,000 to hand out during their term in office. Bids are welcome for this fund over the term of my office.
- August - £500,000 Market Towns fund launched, with the aim of boosting the recovery of Gloucestershire's market towns and high streets. (Applications closed in 2021 with 67 bids approved for across the county)
- September – the County's Bus Service Improvement Plan is launched, which is submitted to the DfT for funding under the Bus Back Better strategy. It was announced in April that GCC had failed to win any money under this scheme.
- October – work begins on segregated cycle path between Gloucester and Cheltenham along the B4063. A cycle route is proposed for Newent to Gloucester in the Local Transport Review, but little progress has been made by GCC in spite of pressure from the local cycling group.
- March – second tranche of School Street schemes launched, following Lib Dem budget amendments passed in 2020 and 2021. Will see four schools added to the two schemes already running, where the street outside the school is closed during drop off and pick up times to encourage safe active travel to school. Not particularly relevant to the Forest of Dean as most schools are not in suitable residential areas.
- April – Ofsted reports back that Gloucestershire County Council's Children's Services have been upgraded from Inadequate to Requires Improvements. While a positive step – moving out of a form of special measures – there is still much work to be done to ensure vulnerable children in the county are well looked after.
- A working party to investigate the sewage pollution in our waterways was called for by the Liberal Democrat Group during the previous term of office and I am pleased to say that this group is now in operation. It aims to bring pressure on the authorities responsible, to act in a way that safeguards our watercourses.

Highways Local Funding.

Each year every county councillor is allocated £30K for small schemes within their divisions. Upleadon was very well placed to take advantage of this scheme for the footpath restoration between Forge Lane and Gloucester Road, to which a contribution was made to the overall cost.

Bids for funding in this year's allocation need to be considered as soon as possible.

Gill Moseley

2 May 2022

