

Minutes of Upleadon Parish Council Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 14 March 2024 at Upleadon Village Hall at 7.50 pm

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

Also present: County Cllr Mrs G Moseley and two members of the public

Apologies: District Cllr P Burford

1. Approval of Minutes of Annual Assembly meeting – 02 March 2023

Cllr Rickard proposed approval of the Minutes of the Annual Assembly meeting of 02 March 2023 which was seconded by Cllr Wood and unanimously agreed.

Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising

2. To receive report from Parish Council Chairman

Cllr Manning was elected as Chairman for 2023/24. Cllr Wood elected as Deputy Chairman. The Council during the course of the year had been consulted on seven Planning applications. Included in these was an application for a Solar Farm at Stream Lane to which the Parish Council objected and was also subsequently objected to by the Forest of Dean District Council and is now subject to Appeal by the applicant.

Cheltenham Motor Club representatives visited the Council and made themselves available to speak to the public at the Village hall about the forthcoming Rally. The Council reiterated its concern for safety of the public particularly when re-opening the road. As a point of information Cllr Manning advised that notification had been given by the Club that this year, the Rally may not pass through the Parish, although a firm decision on this was yet to be made.

An inspection was made of the War Memorial following a suggestion from a member of the public that it needed to be cleaned. It was discovered that it was costly to have the Memorial professionally cleaned when in actual fact all of the names on the Memorial were clearly visible. It was therefore deemed unnecessary at this time to clean the Memorial.

The Council has recently obtained a Grit bin via the County Council for siting at the Church as well as directional signage.

Numerous issues relating to highway defects – potholes, sinking road, as well as overgrown hedges were reported to County Highways for their attention.

Report by District Cllr Mrs Gill Moseley

As a District Councillor for Newent & Taynton, Cllr Mrs Moseley (who was present in her capacity as County Councillor), gave a report on behalf of Cllr P Burford, District Councillor for Upleadon, who had given his apologies.

Cllr Mrs Moseley spoke of the District Council's budget and how a £3M deficit could occur by 2026 if savings cannot be made. She further advised that Publica the overall umbrella for Forest of Dean District, Cotswold, West Oxfordshire and part of Cheltenham Councils are to be disbanded and each Authority will be responsible for its own Council, thus savings can be made here. Its main concern recently has been car parking fees – whilst the preference would have been for free parking in the Council owned car parks, from April 2024 up to one hour of parking will be free, and then it will be at a cost of £1.00 for 2 hours and £2.00 for up to 3 hours.

Report from County Cllr Mrs G Moseley

Budget for 2024/25

Proposals put forward by the Conservative majority administration for £616, up from £567m last year were passed in February. This represents a £46m increase on 22/23 levels. For a band D property, this will mean a monthly increase of £6.34. It is made up of 2.99% increase on council tax and a 2% precept for adult social care.

Amendments by all three opposition parties were accepted. These included the following from my Group:

£25K for further flood alleviation schemes in Forest of Dean as recommended by officers.

£25K additional funding for PROW.

£82K freezing residents parking fees for one year.

£100K for Road Safety measures focused on driver behaviour' One amendment that was not accepted was for £120K to draw up and implement plans to allow foster parents to extend their homes to accommodate more children where they felt they had the capacity.

Motions to Full Council

In recent meetings we have tabled motions which include:

- Care leavers to be recognised as having protected characteristics status.
- Declaring a roads emergency
- Policing in Gloucestershire
- Waiting times in the NHS

Local Bus Transport

BSIP funding has been granted and is put towards extending and replacing some of the reduces services in rural and urban areas, including later services on the 32 Newent timetable.

Road Safety Policy

There is no news of an extension to the Speedwatch Campaign, a joint venture between GCC and the police. Applications are still being processed I understand from the previous round.

Highways Local Fund

This funding continues to be available and suggestions for small projects are welcome.

Build Back Better – Councillor Scheme

£40K for the term of office (until 2025) was initially available and has been added to by £10K. Very little remains but further bids are welcome for projects which enhance community activities. A large variety of projects have been supported throughout the Newent division.

Committees

I am a member of the Environment Scrutiny Committee and as the Spokesperson for the Environment for my Group, I have regular quarterly meetings with the Head of Services, Colin Chick and other senior officers. These meetings are also attended by my colleagues who have responsibilities for Traffic and Transport, and Economic Growth.

I also sit on the GCC Planning Committee which meets less frequently than the monthly FoDDC Development Management Committee to consider applications in the areas of education, waste management and mineral extraction.

I am also a member of the Constitution Committee which oversees the governance of the council.

Any Questions?

Please feel free to contact me about these or any other matters.

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3. Questions from Members of the public

A question was raised appertaining to the Precept for 2024/25 of £4000 when the budget forecast showed a healthy reserve anticipated at the end of the financial year in March 2024. The Chair advised that there was always the possibility of a Parish Election being called if a vacancy occurred, the costs of which were considerable and would fall to the Parish to pay. In addition the Council was currently looking at the possibility of increasing insurance cover on the War Memorial, this would affect the type of policy the Council currently held and initial enquiries suggested the Council would need to move to a more expensive policy which if it went ahead, would affect considerably it would seem its future premiums.

4. This concluded the business of the meeting and it was declared closed at 8.20 pm.