

## **AMPNEY CRUCIS PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 27 MAY 2021 AT 7.00PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, parishioners were invited to attend only if necessary and submit questions prior to the meeting.

Present: 7 electors  
Presiding: Doug Crook  
Clerk: Jayne Webster

### **1. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21 May 2020**

The minutes were approved and signed.

### **2. Annual Report for Ampney Crucis Parish Council**

The Chair gave the following report.

It has been a very different and challenging year for the Parish Council. Since May 2020, all meetings have been held remotely, using Zoom, in line with government legislation and Covid-19 restrictions. This has brought its challenges and limitations, but everyone has adapted and maybe it has encouraged more parishioners to attend. Unfortunately, last May, the village had to cancel plans to commemorate the VE Day 75 anniversary though many villagers did make efforts to put up flags and various displays helped by the glorious weather.

During the year there have been a few changes within the Parish Council. Tony Williams, Malcolm Pink, Tracy Oosthuizen and Andrew Raphael all resigned. I would like to thank each one of them for their hard work and commitment to the Parish Council and the village. Tim Nichols was co-opted in September 2020, Alan Strutt in November 2020 and Nick Wright in March 2021. There is currently one vacancy on the Council which can be filled by co-option and efforts are being made to fill this role. Throughout the year, the Parish Council has been represented at District level by Lisa Spivey and Shaun Parsons at County level. Both have been diligent in attending the remote Parish Council meetings whenever possible, notwithstanding their responsibilities to other parishes. I am sure all members of the Parish Council have welcomed and appreciated their proactive engagement and contributions to our meetings. In the recent local elections Lisa has been elected as the new County Councillor and the Parish Council looks forward to continuing to work with her in both roles.

I would like to thank Shaun Parsons for all his hard work over many years for our parish and the wider community and to wish him all the very best in his retirement.

I must also mention Neil Holt who helps with both the Speed Signs and monitoring our 2 defibrillators, Janet Campbell, our Tree Warden, Paul Brice, who manages the village website and the management of the Village Network Email Alert (Psst) and Gordon Ford who will clear our village street and lanes after heavy snow. I would like to thank them all for their regular service to the council and village and commend their commitment and timely engagement.

We have held 6 meetings over the past year covering a wide variety of topics.

### **Planning**

The Parish Council received 28 planning applications this year, including 11 tree work applications. All planning applications can be viewed online at [www.cotswold.gov.uk](http://www.cotswold.gov.uk). Village residents who have any concerns about specific applications that are still at the consultation stage are invited to contact a

member of the Parish Council or our Clerk. Similarly, any villagers considering submitting planning applications are invited to contact the Parish Council to discuss their intentions.

### **Finance**

The precept for the year ending 31 March 2021, was £22,154.00.

Looking towards the new financial year, we have continued to make provision in the budget for future repairs and maintenance work to the Lych Gate, Preaching Cross, War Memorial, Burial Ground, adoption of Microsoft 365 and the village infrastructure. There is also provision for further works along the Village Street and the installation of a new bus shelter opposite The Crown of Crucis. It is hoped that GCC 50:50 Community Scheme will help to fund these initiatives. We have also set aside funds towards the replacement of the village defibrillators and the development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The accounts for the year have been audited by our Internal Auditor, Mrs Bridget Lazenby and the external audit will be completed by PKF Littlejohn. The relevant pages of our annual audit and other Parish Council documents are accessible through the village website.

### **Burial Ground**

Routine mowing of the Burial Ground is done under our village grounds maintenance contract. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic the annual Burial Ground clear has not taken place.

### **Lych Gate (formerly the village mortuary)**

The timber frame and exterior walls of the Lych Gate are in need of repair and more general refurbishment. The old coatings applied to the timbers some years ago need to be removed, damaged timbers repaired or replaced and treated with a preservative, and where necessary, external render will also need to be repaired or replaced.

The Parish Council has invited expressions of interest from local builders, but to date there has been little interest, so the project has been put on hold for the time being.

### **Preaching Cross**

The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the Preaching Cross and the land immediately around it.

However, maintenance of the footpath itself is the responsibility of the landowners through whose land it passes.

### **War Memorial**

The War Memorial remains in good condition. Maintenance of the garden around the memorial continues to come under the grass cutting contract and is working well.

### **Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**

The NDP Steering Group has worked hard, despite the challenges of the pandemic to produce a questionnaire which is very nearly ready for publishing and distributing to the village, my expectation is that the questionnaire will be distributed, collected and analysed over the summer months. On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank the outgoing Chair of the NDP Steering Group, Charlotte Pink and her team for their hard work and commitment over the past months.

### **Highway matters**

The Parish Council continues to work with County Highways regarding any highways related in the parish. In that regard, we very much appreciate the ongoing cooperation of the Local Highways Manager, Richard Gray.

Specific areas covered during the year include:

**Bus Shelter on A417**– GCC have installed and extended the hard standing base and in addition have removed all the debris from the lay by. However, some new members of the Parish Council were unhappy with the Parish Council's initial plans to install a temporary 'economy' bus shelter while fundraising took place for the installation of a permanent stone or wooden structure. Currently, the Parish Council are looking at oak designs.

### **A417 – traffic calming measures:**

The Parish Council has continued to maintain the grass verges along the northern edge of the A417, between Ampney Park and Mill Cottages. This, together with the village entry and exit signs installed on the A417 in 2016/17 have been intended to alert drivers to the fact that drivers are passing through an inhabited area, and to drive appropriately. As an extension of that strategy, we installed two mobile vehicle activated “Slow Down” signs in May 2018, one on each of the eastbound and westbound carriageways of the A417. The signs were funded by the Police Crime & Commissioner’s Fund for Safe and Social Driving and their regular maintenance as well as collection of data is done by some Parish Councillors and volunteers from the village.

The Parish Council will continue to collect and analyse the data gathered by the signs with a view to determining whether there is a demonstrable case for a speed limit reduction or other traffic calming measures along the A417.

### **Roadside verges:**

The Parish Council continues to be concerned about the erosion of roadside verges around the village. Similarly, the encroachment by overhanging shrubs, trees and hedgerows further narrows our lanes and increases the risks to all road users.

### **Potholes and general condition of village highways:**

The number of new potholes, and the regular and rapid deterioration of previously repaired potholes on the village street and its surrounding lanes continues to be of significant concern to a lot of residents. However, GCC has installed a new gully on the southern side of Hunts Hill to alleviate the storm water drainage issue and the road has been resurfaced.

I would encourage any villager identifying a pothole or other road damage to report it directly to County Highways via their online portal at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk). The same process can be used to report blocked storm drains.

### **Footpaths**

The Council has continued to maintain good relations with landowners and farmers over the past year. The majority of footpaths and stiles within the village are clearly marked and most are in good condition.

However, we do rely upon members of the public to alert us and or the responsible landowner if they become aware of any problems with the footpath network, including damaged or impassable stiles. Similarly, footpath problems can be reported online via the same website for GCC.

### **Village Spring Clean & Litter Pick**

Due to the pandemic the spring clean has been postponed. However, I would urge all villagers to continue picking and disposing of litter as and when they see it. On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank all those villagers for their continuing efforts. I would also encourage the reporting of any Fly Tipping to Cotswold District Council using their website

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/fly-tipping>

### **General Village Maintenance & Facilities**

#### **Ground maintenance:**

Cottage Garden Services terminated their three-year contract, which was due to end in March 2023 at the end of 2020. Countrywide Landscape Maintenance Ltd was awarded a three-year contract which commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and will end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This includes cutting the grass on open spaces and verges in and around the village and on the Burial Ground and War Memorial.

I would like to thank Tony Williams and his team at Cottage Garden Service for their sterling services over the past 15 years.

### **Village defibrillators:**

The Council continues to make provision in the annual budget towards replacement of the two defibrillators which are currently leased from the South Western Ambulance Service. This contract was due to end at the end of July 2020 but due to the pandemic was extended, by SWAST, at no extra charge until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. In March 2021, the Parish Council decided to extend the lease, with SWAST, for a further year while continuing to look at more competitive alternatives.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic SWAST were unable to offer the annual awareness training sessions. However, it is hoped to organise a session within the next couple of months.

### **The Playground:**

Day to day management of the playground is the responsibility of the Playground Committee, although the Parish Council meets the cost of insurance. The playground was closed during the first lockdown, however, with the appropriate Covid-19 restrictions and guidance in place is once again open to the public. I would like to thank Sarah James Sparrow and her team for their hard work and commitment during this difficult year. The Council maintains a reserve fund of approximately £6,000 to provide for the reinstatement of the land, currently occupied by the playground, if it ever has to be removed.

### **Other village matters:**

Notwithstanding the provision of five dog waste bins and other general waste bins across the village that may be used to deposit bagged dog waste, it is very disappointing to report yet again that some villagers or other dog walkers still do not pick, bag and bin their dog waste and this applies to roads, verges, footpaths and any other areas in our Parish. Allotment Lane seems to be particularly badly affected and given its proximity to the children's playground; I find it hard to understand why some dog owners are apparently so lacking in any sense of responsibility. Such behaviour is not only deeply anti-social but is also potentially very harmful to young children and other users of our lanes and footpaths, not least those who regularly mow or maintain our public footpaths, but also to livestock in fields through which those footpaths run. It is also against the law, punishable by fines of up to £1,000. I would encourage you to please spread the word, encourage better behaviour among dog owners or walkers and report any observed bad behaviour to CDC, who have assured us that any reports will be treated in confidence. The lockdowns have resulted in more walkers around the village and The Parish Council plans to provide further signage for the Burial Ground and Playground, in hope of encouraging dog owners to use the appropriate bins.

### **Community Emergency Plan**

The Emergency Plan is updated regularly and lodged with CDC; a copy is posted on the village website.

### **Communications**

The Ampney Times has not been published since the start of the pandemic but hopefully publication will resume in the near future. The newsletter will continue to be funded from advertising revenue, but its running costs are underwritten by Ampney Crucis Parish Council. The Parish Council has installed Microsoft 365 which enables all communications by members of the Parish Council and the NDP Steering Group to be compliant with GDPR legislation. In addition, the Parish Council is now registered with the Information Commissioner's Office.

### **Covid-19**

In the current situation I would like to thank the whole village for coming together to support each other. Rev. John Swanton has co-ordinated volunteers who have been providing help, delivering shopping and medicines. A village WhatsApp group called Ampney Exchange (now Community) has been formed, enabling a large number of residents to keep in touch and I would encourage more of you to join and the email alert group called Psst.

Finally, on behalf of the Parish Council I would like to thank all those who have contributed in any way to the life of the village in the last year – without your help the village would not be such a pleasant place in which to live.

Doug Crook

Chair, Ampney Crucis Parish Council

### **3. Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31 March 2021**

These were previously published on notice boards and the website and were noted.

### **4. Reports from the Village Hall Charity and the Robert Pleydell Educational Charity**

Annual reports for the Village Hall and the Robert Pleydell Educational charities were noted.

### **5. Reports from District and County Councillors**

The District Councillor's report was heard at the Annual Meeting of the Council which followed this meeting.

### **6. Questions**

None.

The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking those present for attending.

Meeting closed at 7.30pm.