

Shurdington Parish Annual Assembly 2023

Minutes of the Annual Assembly meeting held at 7pm on Wednesday 13th April 2022 in the Shurdington Community Centre

ATTENDANCE

Shurdington Parish Councillors: Cllr G Porter (Chair), Cllrs C Stewart, D Hinds, R Allen, G Allen; Mr John Kay, Parish Clerk; Gloucestershire County Councillor Robert Vines; Carolyn Ferguson, Jeannie Dwyer and Adam Cummings (representing Keir Highways).

WELCOME

The meeting was chaired by the Shurdington Parish Council Chair Cllr George Porter who welcomed those in attendance.

APOLOGIES

Tewkesbury Borough/Shurdington Parish Councillor Phil Surman; Shurdington Parish Councillors Phil Hunt and Sandra Sowerbutts provided their apologies.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the 2022 Annual Assembly Meeting held on the Wednesday 13th April 2022, having been circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising, but it was noted that phase 1 of the Parish Council's environmental plan had been completed with tree planting having taken place on the village green. Plans for phase 2 were now underway.

TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM KEIR HIGHWAYS ON THE A417 MISSING LINK

Carolyn Ferguson introduced herself, Adam and Jeannie and provided an informative update on the proposed 4 year delivery of the A417 Missing Link road improvement which aims to solve the historic traffic issues at Crickley Hill, Air Balloon and Nettleton Bottom. With funding and approval received Keir will be the main contractor for the scheme with preparatory and environmental works underway. A phased approach for the construction will take place from October 2023 with much of the works considered "off line" meaning the existing traffic will be unaffected.

Planned road closures of the A417 will be overnight (9pm to 6am) with some weekend closures for some of the larger engineering works required. Daytime closures would only be in emergency or unforeseen circumstances. The official diversion route during the closures will be A46/A40/A435/A436. It is noted that not all traffic would follow the official diversion but signing would be present locally and on the M4/M5 to try to encourage traffic to follow the signed routes.

There was no knowledge of any S106 funds allocated from the scheme for other improvements. Extensive wildflower and grassland flower planting is part of the scheme.

The air balloon public house is being demolished to make way for the new road layout, but the Golden Heart public house remains. Following completion of the scheme vehicle access to the old (current) A417 will be restricted to encourage pedestrians, equestrian and cyclists to use the route.

The representatives from Keir Highways were thanked for their helpful information and left the meeting.

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE COTWOLD PARISH WARDEN

Mr Pointer was unavailable but provided a written report (See Appendix 1)

SHURDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL – CHAIR’S REPORT

Cllr Porter provide his final Chair’s report as he confirmed that he is stepping down from the Parish Council following the election in May 2023. Councillor Porter joined the Council in December 2016 and thanked his fellow Councillors and the Parish Clerk for their support during his term as Councillor and Chair.

Cllr Porter reminded those present that the deadline for registering to vote in the May elections and he hoped to be able to represent the village as a Borough Councillor.

Cllr Porter confirmed the date of the village’s Coronation events as Saturday 6th May and hoped to see many of the parishioners on the day and that he was proud to see the development of the Parish Council’s environmental plan.

COUNTY & BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Vines provided a summary of his written report (See Appendix 2) and noted when he first become Councillor in 2001 the “missing link” scheme was being discussed then and that he was glad to see it finally starting 22 years later!

Cllr Vines also thanked Mr Porter for his service to the Parish Council.

PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT

The Parish Clerk provided an update on the draft 2022/23 accounts which had been passed to the internal auditor. The draft accounts would be presented to Council on the 15th May for approval. The total receipts were £30,481 with the majority being received from the annual precept £27,610.

The total payments amounted to £34,828 with the Parish Council investing £40,000 into the Public Sector Deposit Fund which had significantly increased the interest received. The Council had a total of £16,333 in the bank at the 31st March 2023.

TO RECEIVE UPDATES FROM OTHER COMMUNITY ORGINSATIONS

There were no other updates received.

ANY OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST

There were no matters raised.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 19:55

Date Signed

Appendix 1

Report to Shurdington Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting April 2023

Apologies for not being available to come and talk in person to the Annual Parish Meeting this year due to other commitments. I hope that this report gives you a flavour of work done this past year.

As a voluntary Cotswold Warden and Parish Warden for Shurdington and Leckhampton Parishes, I regularly walk and keep a watch on the public rights of way (proW) footpaths in the two parishes. I do minor repair works: replacing way-mark signs, repairing gates/stiles, and cutting back of intrusive plant growth which might hinder walkers' use and enjoyment of the paths. I report larger repair jobs to our Cotswold Warden Work Party Co-ordinators for a work party to attend and fix; and, through the Co-ordinators, more serious matters or observations to the PROW Team area Officer at Gloucester County Council.

My remit, in theory, lies only with the footpaths that lie within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly known as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty); but in practice I keep an eye on most of the footpaths in Shurdington parish.

I liaise with Councillor Derwen Hinds as my main point of contact with the Parish Council.

Summary of the year's work, April 2022-2023

As local walkers will know, there are on-going issues linked to paths lying to the west of the parish church (a 'rickety' stile, the altered line of the footpath across an alternative bridge, and a locked gate across one path – ASH4 & ASH5). These have been again reported to the relevant PROW Team Officer for the Shurdington parish area, though sadly without any useful action or resolution.

When renewing signage along the line of the Cheltenham Circular Walk (CCW) along ASH4/5/52, two further issues were identified and reported to the PROW Officer: a high stile without dog gate between fields and two trees (one dead) with loose branches hanging over the path towards Cold Pool Lane.

In the course of checking the CCW access and signage, overgrowth was cut back at several points along these paths; and also along ASH3/2/1 – footpaths which form a single line from the King George V playing field north across Chargrove Lane to Up Hatherley Way.

A Wardens' Work Party assisted the PC in renewing the wooden gate near Blenheim Orchard on the path from the playing field.

The footpath sign on Shurdington Road near the parking area for the KGV playing field was also made more obvious by cutting the hedge overgrowth back; and a new arrow sign provided for ASH3 pointing along the edge of the playing field.

Other paths within the parish – lying east of Shurdington Road, along Crippetts Lane, between Leckhampton village and Leckhampton Hill road, and on Leckhampton Hill itself – have also all been regularly monitored, cutback and re-waymarked where necessary. On the Hill I work closely with Friends of Leckhampton Hill (FOLK) and Cheltenham Borough's Senior Community Ranger, Wayne Sedgwick. There are few problems on most of these paths. The exception is the path which climbs Shurdington Hill (ASH14/15) where the line of the path is overgrown and rarely correctly followed by walkers, and frequently muddy underfoot. Remedying this effectively is limited by poor access for heavy equipment and materials.

With the Redrow development all but complete, there is need to re-way mark the route of the proW through the estate from Farm Lane. I am liaising with the PROW Team and other local Wardens to try to achieve this.

In conclusion

I am delighted to say that the new Chair of the Central region of the Cotswold Wardens is John Milroy, who lives in Shurdington.

I am very happy to be informed of issues that walkers might encounter when using the public rights of way footpaths in the parish. These can be reported either directly to me using my contacts below or to Councillor Derwen Hinds (or John Milroy) who can forward them to me. Small clearances and re-signage I can do myself; larger works I can report to our work party teams for resolution in due course. More serious matters I report to our PROW Team Officer via our Work Party Co-ordinators.

Please do take one of the free Cotswold National Landscape foldout Visitor map and guide. Thank you for your time.

Oliver Pointer

Appendix 2

County Councillors AGM Report

The County Council vision for Gloucestershire is to make the most of what the county has to offer, help improve the quality of life for every community, support businesses to be successful and make sure Gloucestershire is a place where people want to live, work and visit.

However, the issue that effects every household in the county relates to Council Tax – how much will I need to pay and how much will any increase be?

Nearly two thirds of households in Gloucestershire are in Bands A, B or C.

The County Council's increase in Council Tax for a Band D payer will be £72.42 (£1.39 per week) meaning the total requirement will be £1523.78.

For 2023/24 this is an increase of 4.99%; made up of 2.99% Council Tax plus an additional 2.00% for the Adult Social Care Precept.

The number one priority is always to protect our most vulnerable and that is why an additional £22 million has been committed to improve children's services and £24 million to support vulnerable adults and those living with a disability.

The budget for 2023/24 totals £566.110 million, that is over half a billion pounds.

Education is an integral necessity for our youngsters, the recent opening of the £35 million High School in Leckhampton is already providing a wonderful, enriching environment for the students living there.

A new school Brook Academy in Mill Lane, Brockworth for students with complex needs is also up and running. I am assured that the new building is working well for the pupils and staff with skilled interaction to ensure a good learning environment.

When I was first elected to the County Council at the start of the new century the very first official meeting I attended in Birdlip Village Hall was to try and start a process to do something about the traffic issues on the A417 dubbed "the missing link".

This is something that I have taken seriously over the previous 22 years and I am sure most of you know that initial work should start later this year.

Hopefully the County Council can contribute towards making junction 10 of the M5 into a four way intersection as currently you can only join to go north and only exit from the north.

Finally, just to remind residents that it is proposed that parliamentary boundary changes should be confirmed in early Autumn, this parish and its neighbours will then be in a new constituency of North Cotswold.

This is only for the election of the Member of Parliament, nothing else will change, we will remain under Tewkesbury Borough Council, Council Tax will still be collected by TBC and your bins will be emptied by Ubico under the Authority of TBC and any planning matters will be decided as they are now.

To repeat, it is just for the election of your MP.

Robert Vines