



# Southam Parish Council



**M I N U T E S** of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. Prince, Harris, Welsh, Calam, Clerk/RFO, County Councillor David Gray and 15 members of the public

## Item 1 – Welcome by the Chair

Attendees were welcomed by Councillor Prince and a report about the Parish Council's year was circulated:

Southam endured a bumpy start to the new Council year with only 2 elected councillors who could not act in quorate. We are grateful to our Clerk for holding the fort and making all the administrative arrangements necessary to gather a great team together.

Our new councillors Pam Sissons, Rob Torrington, Joe Welsh, Marilyn Harris and Joyce Calam have hit the ground running and taken everything in their stride. We would like to commend them for their input and enthusiasm. Pam has taken on the role of Footpaths Warden and Joe has been representing us at meetings with the Police. Steve Lennon and Rebecca Prince are joint chairs of the Council and take it in turns to Chair the meetings. Rebecca also sits on the Village Hall Committee.

It has been a busy year with plenty of planning applications to consider and we have been working hard to represent your views. During March we have been talking to planning specialists to obtain advice about the worrying incursion into the Green Belt and are considering engaging their services to help with the traveller site planning appeal. We have also been consulted on the Chelt/Glos/Tewkesbury Strategic & Local Plan which replaced the Joint Core Strategy. We submitted a full response with the main objective of keeping the Green Belt as it is.

Last year we reported that a new cycleway was expected and now that is under construction. The effects on motorists do not appear to have been explored and we are hopeful that it does not bring more traffic our way.

We were involved in the organisation of the Remembrance Service for the first time this year and the Council had to purchase road closed signs due to them not being made available by the County Council. They had always provided these in the past and the Police had also provided traffic control but this year it was all down to volunteers. Thanks to Steve Welsh, together with Matt and Sophie Lennon, for helping out - more volunteers welcome this year please. It was a very good turn out with a lovely tea provided by the WI.

The Clerk applied for a replacement Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign from the County Council and in March our wonderful Speedwatch Team collected this from Shire Hall and will soon have it up and running. Many thanks to Bill Motion and John Donovan for all their efforts in keeping our roads safe.

Thanks must go to Edna Smith for rolling out the village newsletter 6 times a year. We also try to keep everyone informed as much as possible through our website and via email.

We ended the year with our expenditure tight against budget. In the year we provided grants for the Coronation Event in the village hall, Cheltenham Tigers Rugby Club to upgrade their heating system and Royal British Legion for their work with veterans.

Grateful thanks for the colourful display around the war memorial and to Karen Licence for planting the planter at Noverton and Lynette Walker and Michael Prince for tending the planter in Southam Lane. Also thank you to everyone who mow the verges outside their properties and trim back hedges neatly along frontages ensuring that Southam looks its best.

Last but not least, previous Southam Parish Council members Adrienne, Karen and Carly for their time given up in governing the council business.

#### Item 2 - What can we do to improve biodiversity, regain natural habitat? We will take a look at our Action Plan

The Action Plan was circulated. Once adopted this will be available on the Parish Council website. Residents were asked for their suggestions:

- Fruit trees to be planted around the village – for future community fruit picking and pressing
- Join Plantlife & Glorious Gloucestershire Grasslands for advice about willflowers

#### Item 3 - All about Owls – Richard Harris

Residents were informed about Barn Owl habitat which has changed from the origins in rocky crevices to stone barns. Due to the repurposing of barns as houses the owl now seeks refuge in manmade boxes and is reliant on volunteers who ensure that breeding will continue. The population of Barn Owls in Gloucestershire has increased. Owls are however susceptible to climate change as their food source (mainly voles and rodents) can be driven out by flooding or drought. Richard Harris provided videos of owls in flight, seeking food and feeding their young and answered questions.

#### Item 4 - Resident suggestions and questions

Q Is it feasible to have a 20mph speed limit in Southam Lane?

A Cllr Gray advised that the Parish Council could apply for a Traffic Regulation Order or GCC might if petitioned by the public and there was enough evidence of need. He felt that there should be a change of culture at the County Council as currently there was no appetite for a blanket 20mph approach and traffic calming was only applied to roads where there was an accident history.

Two residents were not in favour of the 20mph limit and would prefer to have better enforcement of the 30mph limit, but open to debate. It was suggested that the police need to be involved in any debate.

#### Item 5 - Community Organisations & County/Borough Councillors will be invited to give reports

Cllr Gray advised that the County Council year end accounts were being prepared but the Council is solvent unlike other councils in the country. There would be a rise in council tax some of which is for adult social care. Some funding would come from the abandoned HS2 for roadworks.

Glos County Council have added climate change to the agenda and have planted 1 million trees across the county to date and installed 130 electric charging points.

Cllr Prince reported that the village hall has had a very busy year and is getting on the plans to extend the hall. The AGM takes place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April and everyone welcome to attend to get to know what goes on in committee meetings

### **A Written Report to Parish Council – Cllr Adcock**

#### **Across the Borough**

- Coopers Edge sports centre to be leased to a local sports club. As reported, ongoing running costs will no longer be the responsibility of TBC.
- Support for local charities and nonprofit organisations. £350,000 is available to support Cultural and Local History and support energy efficiency in community buildings.
- Flooding has been a recurring story in various locations since January. Areas close to our rivers have been most affected.
- Garden Communities Charter was approved by Councillors. The Charter lays out what can be expected. It represents a pivotal moment for the Borough with a commitment to sustainable Community Focussed Development. A considerable engagement program means that local voices have been listened to. Including individuals, Parishes and young people. Garden Communities is a rebrand towards interlinked local communities developed using Garden Town principles.
- Council tax to pay for services increased by £5.00 using the Band D example.
- A farm just outside Winchcombe was successfully prosecuted for damaging 108 Lombardy Poplars.
- "Do I need planning" online planning advice launched.
- Appeal hearing for Kayte Lane set for 30<sup>th</sup> April. Letters sent to interested parties.

#### **Councillor Activity**

- Attended a briefing on a new, yet to be launched customer contact system.
- Attended the Garden Communities Member engagement forum.
- Attended the Biodiversity Net Gain Seminar.
- Attended the Flood Risk Management working group.
- On the panel of a licensing sub committee
- Arranged and attended a meeting with Borough Officers on Honeybourne Meadow to discuss a resident's concern. The meadow and surrounding areas need to dry out before machinery can be used on site to remove waste. Letters are being sent to residents regarding grey water entering the water course and separately the dumping of garden waste.

- Engaged with residents who have recently been impacted by excess surface water. Liaised with the relevant authorities Severn Trent and the Environment Agency.
- Trees arranged for a hedge planting project in Gotherington.
- Trees damaged as a result of the recent grass cutting is being followed up with officers at TBC. Update to follow shortly.
- Police report regarding the use of a green mini-Moto on Honeybourne Meadow, has produced a positive result. The vehicle has been ceased by Tewkesbury Neighbourhood Policing team.
- A Resident has been impacted by a material change to a neighbouring new build. TBC enforcement officer has confirmed the following:

For non-material amendment applications, there is no requirement to consult when considering such applications. Government guidance states:

*As an application to make a non-material amendment is not an application for planning permission, the existing Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 provisions relating to statutory consultation and publicity do not apply. Therefore, local planning authorities have discretion in whether and how they choose to inform other interested parties or seek their views. As by definition the changes sought will be non-material, consultation or publicity are unlikely to be necessary, and there are unlikely to be effects which would need to be addressed under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2011.*

There is no statutory definition of 'non-material', but it is linked to the significance of the proposed changes in context of the overall scheme. Where the Council is satisfied that the changes are non-material the application is granted. If the changes are not considered non-material, the application would be refused and a full application would be required to seek permission for the proposed amendments.

In this instance, the changes were considered to be non-material in the context of the original planning permission and the amendment was granted. The details of the amendment are publicly accessible on our website in the usual way.

As this is a new build in the AONB and there is a NDP in place, we have asked TBC enforcement to confirm that both were taken into account as part of their decision making. We await a further response.

- Nigel has almost completed the Habimap training. So far this citizens science surveying tool for logging biodiversity plant species isn't yet complete but has great potential.

The meeting ended in thanks to Richard Harris for his presentation and everyone was welcomed take refreshment.



# Southam Parish Council



MINUTES (subject to agreement at the next Council meeting) of a Meeting of the Parish Council held at 8.15pm.

**Present:** Rebecca Prince, Marilyn Harris, Joyce Calam, Joseph Welsh

Also Present: G Jennings (Clerk/RFO), 10 members of the public

186. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Torrington, Cllr Lennon and Cllr Sissons

187. To receive declarations of interest/requests for dispensation

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation

188. To receive and agree the minutes of the 12 March 2024

**The Minutes were proposed for agreement by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Welsh, all in favour**

189. Finance & Governance

1. To approve interim payment of £80 to the VHMC and the Year End Bank Reconciliation

Balances at 31st March 23	13945.24
Receipts	14800.17
Payments	<u>-15622.6</u>
Balances at 31st March 24	<u>13122.85</u>

Current A/C	1169.25
Deposit A/C	<u>11953.6</u>
	<u>13122.85</u>

**Proposed for approval Cllr. Harris, seconded by Cllr Welsh all in favour**

2. Agree the budget analysis to end of March

**Proposed for agreement Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Calam, all in favour**

3. Approve payments for April

**Proposed for approval by Cllr Prince, seconded by Cllr Welsh, all in favour:**

<u>Payments - April24</u>	
Washington Printing	150
HMRC PAYE (month12)	101.2
Office Expenses	46.3
Administration	<u>404.66</u>
	<u>702.16</u>

4. Approve appointment of a planning specialist and consider donation pledges to date  
**Cllr Prince explained that quotes had been obtained and planning specialists had been interviewed. Donation pledges of £1550 to date for In Person representation. The clerk advised that the Council had previously set aside budget for written representation and the Council did not have sufficient funds to proceed with In Person representation.**

**For written representation - The most cost effective option appeared to be Ashtons and it was agreed by unanimous vote that they should be appointed to provide written representation once the appeal details are announced.**

5. Review insurance cover and renewal quote  
**Insurance cover was considered adequate and the renewal quote from Zurich was accepted by unanimous vote**

190. Planning Applications to be considered

24/00055/LBC Replacement of windows with wooden double glazed units. Byways , Gravel Walk, Southam - **No Objection**

191. Receive a note of Planning Decisions by Tewkesbury Borough Council & Inspectorate:

None received

192. Date of the Next Meeting

14<sup>th</sup> May 2024 Annual General Meeting