

**CLIFTON UPON DUNSMORE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING**

9th May 2022

Held on

Held at the TMH commencing 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor L Edwards (Chair), Cllr Harris, Cllr Moore, Cllr Dignan, County Councillor Adrian Warwick (arrived 18.50), Borough Councillor Eve Hassell (arrive 19.10), and 7 residents of the parish.

Also present: Representative of Townsend Memorial Hall

Clerk: Miss L Foster

22/1. WELCOME BY CLLR LESLEY EDWARDS

Cllr Edwards welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking them for attending and expressing her gratitude for the interest shown in the parish council's activities over the past year. The report will be split into areas and delivered by the councillors responsible for that area.

22/2. TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Warwick and Cllr Hassell to arrive late

22/3. ANNUAL REPORT OF CLIFTON UPON DUNSMORE PARISH COUNCIL

In 2020 the May local elections were postponed by a year due to government guidelines regarding Covid. This meant that the existing Parish Councillors remained in post until the next local election in May 2021 when all 4 councillors stood down.

We would like to thank them for continuing to support the community during this time.

At the May 2021 elections there were 8 places available for candidates from the Parish of Clifton upon Dunsmore and 1 place for a Houlton candidate.

No one from Houlton put their name forward and only 4 of the 8 places were filled in Clifton, which meant that the 4 candidates could be co-opted onto the Parish Council without going through the formal election process. It also meant that with 4 councillors we would be quorate with regard to decision making.

Because the elections were delayed by a year, we are only in post for 3 years rather than 4! So, we have completed our first year and have only 2 years left. This Annual Parish Statement therefore looks at what we have completed during 2021/22 and what we aim to achieve over the remaining 2 years.

The structure of the statement will also be different from previous years where the Chairman has done all the talking on behalf of the Councillors in terms of their achievements. This time, the Councillors will tell you themselves what responsibilities they hold and what has been achieved and will be achieved in the future.

So, starting with me!

The Parish Council worked very closely last year with the PCC to resolve the outstanding responsibility of **St Mary's churchyard**. The maintenance obligation has now been formally passed to the Parish Council with an agreed action plan that has already been implemented and includes: 17 grass cuttings per year and maintenance of the trees. The headstones and table tombs will remain the responsibility of the PCC.

A call for applications for the **community grant** was announced last year for not-for-profit organisations. Up to £500 was available for each project that supports

community initiatives. In total 4 projects were supported: Tuesday Teas, Houlton Netball Team, the TMH and Clifton upon Dunsmore Primary PTA.

We will be announcing another call for projects at the July PC meeting.

I represent the PC on the **TMH Committee** as the Custodian Trustee. We do not own the building but we can provide support where needed. To this end, we have allocated £10,000 to contribute to the proposed improvement to the TMH agreed and supported by the TMH Committee. The allocation is a grant and the TMH will need to submit an application form to draw down the funds subject to approval.

In April we introduced the **NP** to the community. This is a planning document that gives local people greater control and say over how our community develops and evolves especially, with the potential of an expanding Houlton and other potential developments. In order to move the document forward we sought approval from Rugby Borough Council for the designated NP area which was approved in February. Following the April meeting we now have an Advisory Committee that will meet on the 12th May as well as interest in the proposed Theme Groups which will meet on the 19th May and will look at:

- Housing and the built environment,
- the natural and historic environment and sustainability, incorporating community facilities,
- Employment and transport.

The NP will be developed in consultation with the community through questionnaires and open day events. We have a consultant that will support our progression through several approval stages but has to be agreed by the community through a referendum.

We have received £10,000 in the form of a grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to support the development of the NP. It is anticipated that the NP could take up to 2 years to complete.

Alan

An initial inspection of the boundary fencing at the **Playing Field** highlighted that the chain link fence was in a bad condition partly due to the football teams retrieving balls that had flown into Ian Allen's field and rather than use the gate climbed over the fence. The fencing was repaired to the south and west boundaries and a new gate was positioned directly behind the goals. As a consequence, there has been limited damage to the new fencing, this could be because the quality of the football has improved. The timber fencing to Rugby Road is being repaired, stabilised and a coat of preservative applied.

Following a complaint by one of the residents, whose property sits on the western boundary, about the unsocial behaviour of youths who congregated in the shrubbery area it was decided to inspect all of the trees and shrubs. Following the inspection, it was found that a number of trees had either died or were diseased and therefore trees were removed and the remainder had their crowns lifted and pollard. The shrubs to the perimeter were cut back. The trees and shrubs will be inspected by an arboriculturist every 2-3 years.

The **football pitch** has been hired by The Red Lion and The Stag and Pheasant throughout the season. We have experienced problems with getting the lines on the pitch marked and at one point during the season it almost became impossible to play matches. We did manage to get the lines marked but next season this will need to be done at least 3 times during the season.

The **children's play** area is showing signs of wear and tear. In the coming year we will be refurbishing the roundabout so that it moves freely and installing wet pour to the entrance area. New self-closing gates are to be installed in the next few weeks together with new signage around the park. Looking forward we will be entering into

a maintenance agreement in respect of the play equipment and looking to give the play equipment a fresh coat of paint.

The **pavilion** is causing a bit of a dilemma. At present it is being used primarily by the football teams but little respect is being paid to its condition. After a match both the home and away teams leave mud on the floors, rubbish and shower and shampoo bottles. Despite the PC providing brooms and cleaning gear. Lights have also been left on. The Parish Council is considering the long-term use of the pavilion which will be explored as part of the NP consultation.

Meanwhile work to the pavilion will be starting shortly to replace the timber capping to the front wall with a course of blue engineering bricks and repairs to the timber soffit that has a leak and needs securing. Once done it will receive a new coat of paint.

The **trees** at Lilbourne Road Car Park have been pollard following a branch falling in strong winds and signs have been placed on walls saying that cars are parked at their own risk. There are 2 silver birch trees in the Churchyard on the corner of Church Street and Lilbourne Road that need to be removed. This is in hand and will be carried out in the very near future.

We have repaired the entrance pillar to the **car park** following what we think was a lorry reversing into it. The brick wall facing Lilbourne Road is in a very bad state of repair and quotes are currently being sought to have a large section of the wall taken down and rebuilt and remaining areas made good and repointed.

PETE

The first action for the **allotments** was to revise the tenancy agreements as these had been previously modified but no longer made any sense. The new agreement was compared to those from other Parish Councils to ensure ours was fair and appropriate. There was no price increase.

The next action on the list was to repair the perimeter fence on the Newton Road site, at the bottom end where it adjoins the cemetery. The fence has been repaired but it is clear that the entire fence along Newton Road will need to be replaced in the fairly near future, and provision for this will be made in the next budget.

No plans of the North Road allotments were available, so some time has been spent trying to work out which plot is which, and who is renting each one.

Finally, new signs have been purchased and attached to the allotment gates, which helps to keep the area looking tidy.

The first action for the **Conservation Group** was to write the terms of reference and set up the group as a sub-committee of the Parish Council; this allows the group to have a budget and ensures that insurance is in place for the activities we undertake. We successfully submitted an application for funding from the **County Councillors Grant** to purchase planters for the entrances into the village. The planters will be purchased and seasonal planting used.

Support from the community has been good, with around 10-20 people attending our sessions on the 1st Saturday of every month. We've managed to recruit some new members, as well as keeping our existing supporters busy! The areas of the village we have improved during the past year include:

- The embankment alongside the Newton Road allotments, which provides a great entrance to the village
- The area opposite the cottages on Church Street, where we have planted bulbs and flowers, then mulched the area with wood chippings to help keep the weeds down
- Maintained the footpath to South Road fields, and cut back nettles along the Lion Path
- Trimmed tree branches along South Road to make sure they are above head-height
- Tidied the area outside TMH, and re-varnished the Notice Board

The Conservation Group was also responsible for setting up this year's Christmas trees, one outside the village shops, and a larger one outside the church. Realising that Christmas trees are expensive to buy, Conservation Group persuaded Homebase to give us their unsold stock of trees after Christmas at a significant discount, which have been planted in the unused section of the cemetery to provide future trees for the village. It's a long-term project, but the rewards will be visible in a decade or two!

One disappointment this year was that a beautiful flower display created in an old wheelbarrow at the end of Buckwell Lane was stolen one night. We plan to replace this one with a wooden planter which should be less attractive to thieves, and harder to move.

We recently held a planning meeting to discuss possible future projects. We have had lots of ideas and will be deciding which of these to take forward at a future meeting which will be held in the Sports Pavilion.

Finally, I would like to thank the volunteers who have supported us and urge everybody who has not joined us to come along, even if it's just for one session. Imagine what could be achieved if everyone in the village gave just an hour of their time once a year.

ANDY

We organised a **Meet and Greet** event on the 31st October 2021. The aim was to introduce the new parish council and sow the seeds for the neighbourhood plan. We also looked to promote local groups, societies and businesses. This turned out to be highly worthwhile and well attended. The event raised over £650 for the Royal British legion as well showcasing the highly artistic and excellent pumpkin carving skills in the village – coinciding with Halloween. A further event will be planned to correspond with key milestones in the neighbourhood plan.

Following the installation of low wattage **street lighting** we are now finalising a maintenance contract and reporting mechanism for the upkeep of the 65 streetlights we are accountable for in the village.

As the chairman of the **Joint Clifton Newton Burial Committee**, I'm happy to report we've had a very busy year: we have re-written the constitution to adjust membership from each Parish Council, realigned the erecting of Gravestones with national safety standards (BS BS8415), set up a new policy for the provision of benches in the graveyard along with a revision of the pricing structure for the purchase of plots and internment. The conservation group has made innovative use of the unused part of the cemetery planting Christmas trees to be harvested for the village in the future. We are now looking at the fabric of the cemetery to establish hedging around the new cemetery and refurbish pathways as well as keeping on top of regular maintenance.

At the March PC meeting we approved the new Parish Council **logo** which you will see on all new signs and correspondence.

LESLEY

One of the decisions we made in May 2021 was to have a rotating Chairman and Vice-Chairman, therefore my term as Chairman will come to an end at the Parish Council meeting starting later this evening.

So, this was my first and last Annual Parish Statement. I would therefore like to take the opportunity to thank my Councillor Colleagues and Lindsay our Clerk for their support and guidance during the last 12 months. I think we've all worked well together in creating a strong team that will continue to support the community over the next 2 years.

I would also like to thank Cllr Eve Hassell and Cllr Adrian Warwick for their support and guidance. Whilst I'd been a councillor before, taking on the Chairmanship of the Parish Council was still quite daunting and I still had a lot to learn and still do! I'd also like to thank the residents of the Parish of Clifton upon Dunsmore. Whilst we don't always get a full house at the Parish Council meetings your support in other ways is very much appreciated for example; the Meet & Greet, Conservation Group and the NDP going forward.

22/4 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR CLIFTON UPON DUNSMORE PARISH COUNCIL FOR 2021-22

I should confirm that the accounts will be subject to the Annual Return Internal and External Audit process in June 2021, and will be available to anyone who wishes to see them during the period of public inspection.

In the meantime; the parish council began the year with £109,764.86 in the bank; of which around £25,000 is earmarked for village upgrades.

For the financial year 2021-22 the parish council received £45,250 in precept from the Borough Council. We also received monies from the football clubs' use of the playing fields, from the allotments and grazing fields. This allowed for an extra income of £2131.37

Significant outgoings this year are for the usual costs of street lighting, insurance and maintenance costs associated with the pavilion and playing fields.

The Parish Council have also paid grants to several village organisations totalling £1211.90.

Having started the year with funds available of 109k, we are likely to have finished the year with a bank balance of around £116k. There are still projects outstanding from 21-22 which will be carried forwards including costs for works to the pavilion, play area, churchyard and car park.

22/5 REPORT FROM BOROUGH COUNCILLOR Eve Hassell

Cllr Hassell stated that the bin strike will continue until 15th June and discussions with Unite are ongoing. The Pay scale has been agreed nationally. Dog waste bins and street waste bins should be emptied next week.

There has been a request to discuss shops and facilities in Houlton. The Parish Council will try to meet to take part in discussions.

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR ADRIAN WARWICK

Councillor Warwick began by stating it is nice to be meeting in public again. He is proud of the contributions made by Warwickshire County council employees and how they coped during the Covid crisis. Many members of staff were redeployed to other roles.

The West Midlands Police Force is now independent and working well and working with financial pressures.

The Council tax rose by 2.99% and 2% for adult social care. This does not meet the current rate of inflation and there will be budget pressures within social care.

The relief road works are ongoing and we await adoption of the road. There will be a traffic calming scheme on Hillmorton Lane and improvement to the junction at St Thomas Cross pub, including extra signage.

The Councillor grant fund has reopened and will close on 29th May.

22/6. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

Townsend Memorial Hall- presented by David Glover

The Townsend Memorial Hall has been working in a post Covid recovery phase. Nearly all groups have returned to the TMH and there are many new groups. A new website has been created with thanks to the Parish Council for part funding. A new Facebook page has been set up. The TMH is working on a development program and have received initial costings and plans. The AGM will be held on July 5th.

Houlton Netball Club

The netball club would like to offer thanks for the grant received. They have managed to form a new team and 30-35 women now attend sessions. With the grant it allowed them to purchase new equipment and have teams competing in the Rugby league. Members from Clifton are welcome to join.

Tuesday Teas

The group are pleased to recommence in October 2021 following a shutdown due to Covid. 20-25 people get together each week. The money to keep Tuesday Teas running is raised by holding monthly events. They would like to thank the TMH, Parish Council and volunteers for their help.

22/7. OPEN FORUM

One member of the public thanked the councillors for stepping up and getting the village involved and offered thanks to the Chair. It was reminded that the Parish Council are the foundations of local democracy that provide feedback to Rugby Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council. It is sometimes difficult to explain the importance to the village and the benefits of having a Parish Council.

The Chair of the meeting thanked all who had attended for their participation.

Meeting closed 19.29pm

Minutes approved and accepted as correct

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Chair

Dated