

MINUTES of a Chalford Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday, 6th February 2025 at 7pm at the Parish Centre in accordance with notice given.

In the Chair: Cllr Trinder

Present: Cllrs Beioley, Gardiner, Humberstone, Lee, Oakley, Pearson, Samaroo, D Taylor, L Taylor, Woodfine, District Cllr Watson

In attendance: The Clerk

1.02.25 APOLOGIES Cllrs Funnell, Morris-Wyatt, Roberts, District Cllrs Boyle and Fenton, County Cllr Turner

Cllr Trinder welcomed Cllrs, especially our two new Cllrs Humberstone and Woodfine and members of public to the first meeting of the year. Cllr Trinder took a moment to reflect on the passing of former Cllr David Wood. David was an active Cllr for over 20 years, and he will be greatly missed. Cllr Trinder said a few words in David's memory, and proposed we hold a one-minute silence at the end of the meeting, along with a poem which would be read by Cllr Samaroo. Cllr Trinder invited members of the public to stay for this should they wish.

Cllr Trinder had spoken to each member of public as they arrived to confirm who wished to speak. She gave a quick recap on procedures reminding everyone that a total of 15 minutes is allocated for public speaking, with a maximum of five minutes per person. She then checked that all members of the public had received the Silver Street briefing note and that all Cllrs had read the note which was circulated prior to meeting.

2.02.25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Cllrs Gardiner and Woodfine declared an interest in agenda item 13 regarding the correspondence from the Secretary of the Church Charity.

3.02.25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - Cllr Oakley noticed an error in minute 06.12.24 b) Sycamore Grove which should read **would not be appropriate** not **would not be inappropriate**. The Clerk had corrected this prior to meeting so that the Chair had the correct copy to sign. Subject to this amendment Cllr Oakley proposed “**acceptance of the 5th December 2024 minutes**” This was seconded by Cllr Samaroo. There were two abstentions.

4.02.25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Nine members of public attended.

One person attended in relation to agenda item 6, Bussage Ward Councillor vacancy, to present/answer any questions on their application.

Eight attended in relation to agenda item 5 Silver Street car park, six of whom were in favour of keeping the current management arrangements as they are, and two in favour of introducing a permit system.

Cllr Trinder invited those that wished to speak to go in the order in which they arrived.

Three members of public made representations stating the reasons why they were in favour of keeping arrangements as they are. In summary, the key points mentioned were: the natural ebb and flow of the car park works well; there are rarely occasions when it is difficult to find a space other than at times like Christmas etc which everyone is accepting of; most users are considerate and neighbourly; and the car park is a valuable community resource for trades peoples, nurses, carers etc to be able to use and the needs of everyone have to be considered. Concern was raised about how any permit system could be fairly enforced, and that a third-party company would want to make a profit and issue tickets. They suggested that permits won't reduce demand or create more on-street parking, and while permits may improve the situation for a minority it will worsen it for the majority.

Two people spoke in favour of introducing a permit system of some sort and requested the Council revisit this option. One member of public felt that the survey that was carried out last year wasn't fair and did not reflect needs of some households, with a minority of households who do not have off-street parking being disproportionately affected. They felt that the situation had worsened over the Summer. Some cars can be parked for weeks at a time, and some properties have two or three cars, and their drives are left empty while they use the car park. Their view was that the light touch management hasn't worked, that free use of the car park encourages car ownership and is not sustainable. They suggested that the monies raised from a permit system could be used to fund EV chargers.

One member of public stated that it was good news about the Old Neighbourhood Inn reopening, but thought it was unlikely that residents will be able to make use of the pub car park. They also suggested that overspill parking from pub customers could impact on the Silver Street car park and on street parking locally. Two questions were also raised:

- 1) Was there any weighting applied to those who don't have off street parking and those that do when the survey was carried out?
- 2) What were the light touch controls, and how were they implemented?

05.02.25 SILVER STREET CAR PARK

Cllr Trinder started by answering the two questions that had been raised. She confirmed that:

- 1) The previous survey was not weighted.
- 2) The light touch controls involved erecting new car park signage setting out guidance on how to use the car park. Cllrs frequently walk past the car park but there is no formal enforcement.

Cllr Trinder then asked for members thoughts.

Cllr Gardiner explained that he has personal experience of parking in this area as he used to live in Silver Street and he feels it would be difficult to implement a fair parking permit system. He thinks that a permit system could cause friction and result in permit spaces being empty and not able to be used.

Cllr Pearson feels that the provision of allocated parking for individual households is not the responsibility of the Parish Council and, as parking can influence property prices, he has concerns about the Parish Council being drawn into this. Cllr Pearson feels that there are many areas within the Parish where there are difficulties with parking arrangements; this is part of the fabric of living in Chalford. Cllr Pearson also stated that the lack of complaints over the last 12 months about the current management regime shows that the arrangements are working.

For the benefit of the two new Cllrs, Cllr Beioley explained that this has been a contentious matter with strong views, and he thanked members of public for a respectful discussion. Cllr Beioley stated that he shares Cllr Pearson's concerns; it is not the Parish Council's job to provide parking spaces. He said that therefore he is not in favour of a permit scheme as he thinks this could be divisive and cause controversy, and we want to avoid this.

Cllr Woodfine echoed the concerns of Cllrs Beioley, Gardiner and Pearson.

District Cllr Watson noted her understanding that the lease that the new owners of the Old Neighbourhood Inn have on part of the car park is quite restrictive, such that it can be used for customers only.

Following a lengthy discussion Cllr Pearson proposed "**we proceed with the status quo**" This was seconded by Cllr Beioley. A vote realised seven in favour, there were two abstentions.

Cllr Trinder asked members for their thoughts on the car park management review process going forwards. A member of public requested that the management arrangements are not reviewed as frequently as every twelve months as it causes a lot of unrest and uncertainty each time a review takes place.

A brief discussion took place, and Cllr Trinder suggested that residents should feedback any concerns that arise to the parish office immediately and a formal record will be kept. The Clerk will liaise as necessary with the car park working group (which comprises Cllrs Lee, Morris-Wyatt and Trinder) who will keep the situation under review. Any serious concerns or issues will be immediately raised with Full Council. Otherwise, the working group will commit to provide an annual report to Full Council on the basis of which a decision will be made about whether further consultation is necessary. Cllr Trinder proposed **“we refer to the working group in liaison with the Clerk to review the management of the car park as necessary or otherwise on an annual basis”** This was seconded by Cllr Samaroo and unanimously agreed. ***ACTION: Clerk/Working Group***

Cllr Trinder thanked all members of public for a friendly and civilised discussion.

One member of public who attended in relation to agenda item 5, stayed for the remainder of the meeting.

06.02.25 BUSSAGE WARD VACANCY – The applicant submitted a statement detailing why they would like to apply to become a Councillor and telling members a little bit about themselves; this was circulated to members prior to the meeting. During the meeting the applicant expanded on why they would like to join the Council and took questions from members. While their application was considered and a discussion took place, the applicant left the room. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed to co-opt the candidate into Bussage Ward.

Cllr Pearson proposed **“we co-opt Linda Goulding into the Bussage Ward”** This was seconded by Cllr Beioley and unanimously agreed.

Linda was congratulated and invited to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

07.02.25 a) COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT – A copy of County Cllr Turner’s report was circulated to members prior to the meeting. There were no questions.

b) DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT – Cllr Watson apologised that a report was not yet available, she will circulate as soon as it is published. Cllr Watson explained that both GCC and District Council meetings clash with Chalford’s Full Council meetings so County Cllr Turner is unavailable for the next few meetings, however any questions can be passed back via Cllr Watson.

Community Benefit Society (CBS)/Old Neighbourhood Inn – It is fantastic news that the Old Neighbourhood Inn has been purchased and will reopen as a pub as soon as possible with the new owners already working hard to achieve this. The CBS are looking at how they close and return everyone’s pledges, and thank the Parish Council for their unwavering support throughout the process of ensuring it remains a pub.

Chalford Hub – A meeting took place called ‘know your patch’ with various agencies and local venues to discuss how everyone can better work together to create a formal district support network. This was a success with many attending who had never met before. Progress is being made and hopefully soon there will be more of an offering locally.

Fourways Crossroads – District, County, Highways and Parish are working together to achieve the right outcome for a safer junction.

Local Nature Action Plan (LNAP) – Cllr Watson thanked Cllr Oakley for the invitation to the LNAP meeting and noted the collaboration with neighbouring parishes.

As Cllr Watson needed to leave the meeting at 8.30pm, Cllr Trinder proposed we bring agenda item 9 forward so that Cllr Watson was present for the discussion.

09.02.25 FOURWAYS CROSSROADS

A meeting took place with Highways, the Road Safety team at GCC and District and County Cllrs. Please see attached meeting note. Cllr Trinder confirmed that the proposed letter along with supporting evidence which is currently being gathered will get the process started and hopefully lead to a meeting with the TRO team to find out more about the cost implications and funding options. Following a brief discussion Cllr Samaroo proposed **“we write to County Cllr Turner to request a Traffic Regulation Order to install a safety buffer at the Fourways Crossroads”** This was seconded by Cllr Pearson and unanimously agreed. Cllr Morris-Wyatt has kindly offered to draft the letter. **ACTION: Cllr Morris-Wyatt/Clerk**

Cllr Trinder encouraged all Cllrs to sign the petition if they had not done so already. The Clerk will send the link to all Cllrs. **ACTION: Clerk**

The Clerk was asked to investigate if a lollypop person could be employed to assist at the crossroads. **ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Oakley asked where we are at with the introduction of a blanket 20mph limit. Cllr Trinder confirmed that there has been no further update since the Parish Council supported this initiative and we were advised that GCC were not looking to introduce 20mph limits. The Clerk will follow up with County Cllr Turner to see if there is any update. **ACTION: Clerk**

08.02.25 CLERK’S REPORT –

St Marys Canal Path Flooding – Concerned residents have contacted Network Rail directly about the flooding in this area and received a response which stated that this section of the canal path was not the responsibility of Network Rail and indeed is not a public right of way. This naturally caused further concern as up until now Network Rail have confirmed that it is their responsibility and investigations into the problem have been started by the Senior Drainage Officer. County Cllr Turner is aware and has been responding to residents. The Clerk met with the Public Rights of way Officer on Wednesday 5th February, and he confirmed that he is pursuing this as it is a public right of way as far as records show.

10.02.25 BUSSAGE PLEASURE GROUND MEMEORIAL PLAQUE Former Cllr David Wood was hugely involved in bringing the Bussage Pleasure Ground project to life. The installation of the new play equipment is scheduled to start on 24th February and should take approximately three weeks. Cllr Samaroo proposed **“we install a memorial plaque for David on the fencing once installation is complete”** This was seconded by Cllr Trinder and unanimously agreed. Cllr L Taylor kindly offered to provide a brass plaque. **ACTION: Cllr L Taylor/Clerk**

Cllr Samaroo confirmed that she would like to hold an official opening of the new play area, and David’s wife, daughter and grandchildren will be invited.

11.02.25 LOCAL NATURE ACTION PLAN (LNAP) – Cllr Oakley’s report was circulated to members prior to the meeting along with some Bat box designs provided by Cllr Gardiner.

Cllr Trinder thanked Cllr Oakley for all the hard work and noted the great collaboration with neighbouring parishes.

Cllr Gardiner explained that Bisley with Lypiatt PC carry out smaller projects and he is keen to start working on specific pieces of parish land where we can enhance biodiversity, e.g. the hedge at the

cemetery is not very biodiverse so this could be replaced with a native hedge. Various sites will need to be identified and assessed to determine what can be done. Cllr Trinder suggested that this should form part of the Neighbourhood Development plan and would be a good opportunity to engage with local groups and consult to gain local opinions.

12.02.25 COMMITTEE/EXTERNAL MEETING REPORTS

Works Committee – Cllr Samaroo updated members about the Community Composting scheme. The working group are due to visit the Bisley site on Tuesday 11th February, and are meeting on 12th February to discuss the results of the public consultation carried out by the Community Composting Group along with their answers to many other questions. It doesn't appear at this stage that the group have the necessary funding, licences or planning permission, so the project is still very much a work in progress and the working group are working closely with the community composting group. Cllr Samaroo explained that the schemes at Bisley with Lypiatt and Brimscombe and Thrupp took four years to reach the point of starting up.

There were no updates regarding planning or finance that were not covered in the minutes.

Cllr Trinder proposed “**we suspend Standing Order 3x and extend the meeting to 9.15pm to allow all agenda items to be discussed**” This was seconded by Cllr Samaroo and unanimously agreed.

13.02.25 CORRESPONDENCE –

Elections at Stroud District Council – SDC contacted the Clerk to request to use the Parish Office as a polling station on Thursday 1st May 2025. The Clerk has completed the necessary paperwork.

Church Charity - The Secretary of the Church Charity contacted the Clerk to ask if the Council would consider taking on the ownership of two burial grounds located in Keble Road and Randalls Green. The email thread was circulated to members prior to meeting. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed to request a meeting with the Charity secretary to understand more about the implications of taking on the ownership of the burial sites and what the intentions of the Charity are with regards the land leased to Chalford Hill Primary School. Cllrs Beioley, Lee and Trinder volunteered to meet, the Clerk will arrange. **ACTION: Clerk**

EV Chargers – A resident emailed the Clerk to ask about the charging infrastructure within the parish for people with car ports. It was agreed to respond to the resident to explain that the PC hope to find ways to increase provision of EV charge points and may be able to consider this as part of the forthcoming Neighbourhood Development Plan. However, the PC does not have the resources to provide infrastructure to all households. The Clerk will send the resident the report recently produced by SDC. **ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Oakley explained that the two EV chargers at the Parish Centre are well used, and it would be helpful if they were quicker chargers. Cllr Oakley proposed that we investigate the cost of upgrading the existing chargers to either 22KW or 50KW chargers. It was agreed to refer this to the Finance and Management Committee. **ACTION: Clerk/RFO.**

Cllr Trinder explained that the Neighbourhood Plan working group met with two members of the Gloucestershire Rural Communication Council about a Housing Needs Survey being carried out in Chalford in early 2025. At the time of meeting, it seemed that we would have no influence over this, however, Cllr Trinder received an email stating that on reflection they have decided that it was too early in the process to be of benefit to the community, and they are now going to wait until Chalford community are further along with collecting evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan.

14.02.25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS Cllr Trinder asked members to consider ideas for the theme for this year's annual meeting of the parish. She asked for ideas to be emailed to the Clerk.
ACTION: All

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 3rd April 2025 as Civility and Respect training will take place on Thursday 6th March 2025.

Cllr Trinder held a one minutes silence followed by Cllr Samaroo who said a few words in memory of former Cllr David Wood, she also read a few words from former Clerk Jenny Taylor, and she read a poem.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.15pm