

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 February 2024 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT: Cllr Mulligan– Chair, Cllr R King, Cllr Howell, Cllr J Hetterley, Cllr Hamilton, Cllr Slater, Cllr D Bendall. Cllr Parsons

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: - Mrs S Baker (Clerk),

VISITORS: 8 Members of the public.

18/24 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – Cllr Mulligan asked the attendees if they wished to speak on a planning issue. All 8 members of the public expressed a wish to talk on the application for change of use for the Queen

Matilda. Agenda item 11 was moved up the agenda. Cllr Mulligan allocated each member of the public 3 minutes to speak.

Cllr Mulligan stressed to the public that although the Parish Council can express an opinion on planning issues, it holds no weight with the planning authority.

Q1. With the body of objections expressed on the planning portal. Will it have any sway over the decision.

A. No, any objection must have a valid planning reason.

Q2. What do they pay attention to? The viability claim seems spurious.

A. The Planning officer will look at the wider aspect of the village. All the amenities available.

Q3. There are 120 objections to the plan on the planning portal and only 9 supporting. There is rumour that work to convert the pub to a house has already started.

A. Renovation work has definitely not started. It is not a listed building so the owners do not need planning permission to carry out internal work.

Q4. Will each member of the Parish Council submit views or is it done as one objection.

A. The Parish Council submits its view as a consultee.

Q5. It is abundantly clear that 10% of the population have objected to the plans. Will the Parish Council do anything in its powers to oppose this application.

A. It is speculation how many residents object to the application. The Parish Council can only submit reiterate the opinion and the views of the residents.

Cllr Mulligan stated he had visited the owners who explained their situation. The previous owners scraped a living. Although the accounts looked good, the reality was not as expected. Certain declarations made at purchase have proved inaccurate. Two main agents have been approached to market the property who both refused unless the purchase price was £100K below the price paid.

Cllr Mulligan read a letter from the owners of the Queen Matilda which explains their position. (appendix 1)

Cllr Mulligan suggested the attendees organise a group and approach Joe Harris leader of CDC to express the wish for the planning consent to be delayed and the owners to market the property for 3/6 months. In order to show that all options to maintain the pub have been fulfilled.

The Public representation left the meeting.

19/24 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE – Cllr Hirst - GCC

20/24 CODE OF CONDUCT

166.1.18 Declaration of Interest in Items on the Agenda

None

166.2.18 Updates to Members Register of Interests

None.

21/24 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 th January 2024

The minutes of the meeting held 10th January were signed as a true record.

22/24 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 January 2024

None

23/24 COMMUNITY ISSUES AND PROJECTS

Community Issues

Playing Fields Update

Cllr Mulligan is expecting the quote on for the footpath next week.

The ROSPA playground inspection is booked. They have agreed to attend site April /May.

No specific date has been given.

Memorial Hall

Cllr Mulligan has received a quote to replace the heating system. He will forward it to the Parish Council in time for the Trustee meeting.

The Clerk said she still doesn't have access to the Charity Commission website. 2 The accounts for 2022 have not been submitted and 2023 are ready for submission. Cllr Mulligan said he has tried calling on 3 occasions but was unable to complete the call due to being kept on hold for a very long time.

BIO-DIVERSITY POLICY

Cllr King distributed a draft copy of the biodiversity policy prior to the meeting. Cllr Hetterley proposed adopting the policy. This was seconded by Cllr Mulligan. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.

DEFIBRILATOR

The Clerk said she had received a quote for the new defibrillator . £750. The Council agreed to proceed with the purchase and authorised the Clerk to proceed.

24/24 TRAFFIC & HIGHWAYS

Following the reporting of the subsidence on the Nailsworth to Avening Road. Cllr Hetterley asked if there had been any follow up from Highways. The Clerk said they attended site but haven't received any report back. The Clerk will contact the Highways manager to enquire what the status is.

Cllr King said there was a parent of a disabled resident who was having problems accessing the back of her car for wheelchair access. Cllr Hetterley requested that a disabled parking space be installed. The Clerk said she would contact Highways and asked Cllr King to supply the address.

25/24 FINANCE

- I. **Cllr Hetterley presented the Parish Councils financial position going forward. This showed the Council finances remain healthy.**
- II. **Approve bills for payment – The list distributed prior to the meeting was agreed.**

- III. The Clerk confirmed that she had booked the J Bookkeeping, internal auditor for the 2024 Agar submission.

126/24 POLICE REPORT

The Clerk said she had not received a report this month The PCSO has been in touch asking where the area was that had speeding issues as they intend to set up mobile speed unit.

Cllr King said there are a number of cars and vans in the village without tax and Mot. The Clerk will request the police attend to check.

27/24 DISTRICT COUNILLORS REPORT -Cllr Slater appendix

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28/24 COUNCTY COUNCILLOR REPORT – unavailable

29/24 PLANNING AND TREE WORKS

New Planning Applications

23/04043/FUL - The Queen Matilda Tavern Change of Use from Public House to residential dwelling. – Following a long discussion and representation from residents expressing there concern the Parish Council will inform the Planning Officer of the concern over losing one of the last remaining community assets in a village that has been identified as deprived and is against Cotswold District Councils Community Plan currently out for consultation.

23/03998/FUL - Bannut Tree New Inn Lane Replace boundary dry stone wall and build new retaining block wall. Replace coping stones on top of the dry-stone wall that runs along the driveway. Support – It is understood that there may be trees that could possibly be an obstruction. The Council request that every effort is made not to damage the trees.

23/03893/CLEUD - 48 High Street Certificate of Lawful Use or Development under Section 192 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the confirmation of use of No.46 as additional residential curtilage - Support

Decisions Notices

24/00029/AGFO - Hazelwood Cottage - Prior notification for the erection of modern steel framed agricultural building for forestry purposes - Prior Approval not required - AGFO

23/03649/FUL - 51 Nags Head Lane - Reroofing and extending existing garage to form kitchen and extending to form new stairwell. Relocating car parking and vehicular access - Application Withdrawn

23/03402/FUL - 59 High Street- Partial demolition of garage and conversion to independent dwelling with associated works. - Application Withdrawn

23/02690/LBC - 25 Point Road - Replacement of front elevation windows - Permitted.

30/24 CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported very little correspondence due to the Christmas break.

NALC Newsletter

NALC Chief Exec Bulletin

CDC Parking Strategy review

Application to reclassify restricted byways - Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

Library Customer Information

Glos Wildlife Trust – Orchard Planning – Free Workshops

Precept Submission
 Rhiannon Davies – Queen Matilda
 Annual Parish Workshop 27thFeb 6 – 7 pm
 GCC climate Change Community Fund = deadline 26th Feb
 GCC Councils Connected
 NALC Newsletter
 Warden Led Walks – Feb /March
 ROSPA Playground Inspection – Booked April/May
 Cotswold National Landscape – Caring for the Cotswolds grant funding.

31/24 COUNCILLORS

Cllr Bendall reported that he had resigned as Governor to the Primary School. The school has informed him that a Parish Council representative is not required. The Parish Council feels this is unfortunate and would like to continue to have representation on the Board of Governors. The Clerk will write to the Headmistress to request continued involvement.

32/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 13th March 2024 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Actions

166/23	Order Defib	Clerk	23/24
148/23	Chase contractor for path quote	Cllr Mulligan	23/24
10/24	Make Payments	Clerk	25/24
14/24	Planning Response	Clerk	29/24

Appendix 1

Correspondence from the owners of the Queen Matilda

uary 2024

Dear Patrick, Parish Council members and villagers

It is with a heavy heart that we have had to take this decision. Please know that we have invested our life savings into this business and sought various ways to provide a viable offering to our customers. We too are devastated by its closure. The personal loss and emotional stress have been enormous.

There have been some issues raised within the comments which we feel require clarity:

- Assumptions that we are Londoners/urbanites — James grew up in a village in Gloucestershire, and lived in villages throughout England & Wales. As a family we lived a short distance from Avening 5 years prior to purchasing the Queen Matilda. We are very familiar with village life and the area.
- From working in hospitality to setting up various businesses, coupled with the support and mentorship of our chef, who had owned his own small village pub for 15 years and is now executive chef at the Hilton — experience is not in question.
- Our menu was inclusive of pub grub — Burgers, pizza, pasta, fish and chips, steak, Thai green curry, calamari etc. to name a few. We offered a Chef's Specials menu to customers wanting something different, and in keeping with nearby pubs e.g. The Ragged Cot, The Crown, The Old Lodge, The Bell in Sapperton, all of which offer good food, which draws people in from surrounding areas. We offered special events to add to our offering on either quiet days of the week, or on bank holidays, or in support of national events.
- Our menu, and our range of draught beers and house wines were competitively priced and continuously monitored.
- We were most definitely child friendly — 4 highchairs used frequently and frequented by families. Children could eat any main meal on the menu at a child's price.
- We did not discourage drinkers — we had 8 draught beers and an extensive wine list. The bar area was dedicated to drinkers. Bar stools were provided for drinkers as well as high tables.
- Service charge was optional, and this was stated on our menu. Customers chose to pay the service charge, or not — this is not an unusual practice.
- We tried Saturday lunchtime trade but there was no uptake from the village. Avening is not a destination village like Minchinhampton, Nailsworth or Tetbury. This is further supported by fact that The Bell is only open evenings.
- Replacement windows — not really applicable to this application, however there have been comments around our intentions which have no foundation and are inaccurate. The windows were rotten and needed to be replaced.
- A number of objectors have admitted to not liking our offering and in turn not supporting us. This does not mean we had a bad offering — Tripadvisor had over 250 reviews rating 4.5 — 5 stars, and at the time in the top 3 in the Tetbury area. 114 Google reviews rating us 4.8 stars. Booking.com has had 309 reviews since the beginning of 2022 with a rating of 9.1 with a travellers award.
- Eating out prices have significantly increased over the last year.
- No one could have predicted that, 6 months on from offer to purchase, costs would spiral out of control. Energy bills and utilities went up by 300%. Any profits made historically would have been gobbled up by that alone, let alone the dramatic rise in interest rates, food, fuel, wages, beverage costs etc. All these costs are only increasing, and establishments are not able to pass them on.
- Big chains are closing down pubs (In 2023 Weatherspoons closed 33 pubs, Marsdens closed 61 with more to come in 2024). Food and drink prices continuing to rise - [an article in Gloucester Live on 6th February stating Weatherspoons have increase their prices for the second time in 6 months — all this even with their national buying power and good footfall.](#)

- Butcombes put up their prices at least 3 times in 2022; food prices rose between 30-50%.
- Comparing the viability of a pub pre 2022 is not realistic. People are not going out and spending as much anymore. Caterer Licensee Hotelier News says: "750 pubs set to close in the first half of 2024 as rising costs push sector to the brink". This will be the highest number of closures on record for a 6 month period.
- This application will not change the look and feel of the building. The village has a number of amenities to ensure there is community space for the vulnerable or lonely. The Bell, the social club with function room, bowling alley and community café. Several clubs meet during the week. There is a W.I., a youth club and a monthly cinema club and an active Church community.
- Having lived and settled our family here, we are keen to continue residing in the village and continue to run the B&B which will in turn still be an offering in the community, as well as bringing in revenue to the area and The Bell, supporting the local business. It was with great sadness that we had to close the pub. We didn't do it lightly,

Kind regards

James & Jo

Appendix 2

CDC: We reviewed the administration's budget proposals at Overview and Scrutiny (O&S), and it was refreshing to note that the spending was realistic, although reserves are forecast to further reduce in the coming 1-3 years. There was good news from the government that an additional £118k will be received by CDC, but it is still difficult to budget properly without a multi-year settlement. Elsewhere at O&S and full council, the updated Local Plan was reviewed – this is now available for public consultation via the CDC portal. We also reviewed the Corporate Plan, which is effectively the manifesto and priorities for the administration.

The **Public Conveniences Review Group's** recommendations were largely accepted by the Cabinet, but any changes to entry fees will be delayed until more data is available from the newly installed card readers at some sites. There will be a tendering process for the ongoing cleaning and maintenance contract, and a budget for initial refurbishments will be allocated later in the year. Where sites have been identified to be closed, consultation will take place with Town councils, and any contractual considerations will be followed up by officers.

Visit to Javelin Park Incinerator – Following my visit to the recycling plant last year I was invited by Avening WI to join them on a visit to the Javelin Park Incinerator near Gloucester. The household residual waste, that is waste left over after kerbside recycling, is managed by a Spanish company called Urbaser on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council. The 'Energy from Waste Facility', significantly reduces the county's dependence on landfill, whilst recovering value from waste in the form of electricity, recyclable metals, and aggregates.

The site has a long history, being a key facility for the development of the Javelin jet aircraft during the second world war, and this is reflected throughout the plant. If you have noticed an unusually straight section of the M5 going south from junction 12, this is actually built over the original runway! The building is a bit 'Marmite' with many people hating it, but it was designed to minimise the visual impact in such a prominent position – you can be your own judge. Inside, it is a cathedral of steel, with waste delivered into a giant concrete hopper at one end. The mostly automated process (there are only around 40 workers) consumes up to 190,000 tons of rubbish per year which

would otherwise have gone to landfill. A grab, like a giant version of the one to win a teddy at fairgrounds, feeds the two furnace conveyor belts. The fire heats water (later super-heated) into steam which drives a massive turbine, producing enough surplus energy to power 25,000 homes. The facility manages the gaseous products of combustion through a sophisticated cleansing and filtration system to ensure that flue gas emissions are well within regulatory limits – the only visible evidence (depending on the weather) is a small plume of warm gas rising from the chimney. From this process, there are two solid waste products: Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA), which is processed to recover metals that have passed through the system and is then graded for recycling, and lime-based residues from the flue gas treatment system, which are taken off site for treatment and disposal.

Visit to Zero Avia – Here is another high-tech firm on our doorstep based at Cotswold Airport. It is a world leader in developing aeroplanes powered by Hydrogen – not burned in the engine, but powering electric fuel cells. The 200+ employees at ZeroAvia have developed high performance, high efficiency systems from scratch in pursuit of zero-emission flight. The technology has already been proven, with their Dornier 228 aircraft making history last year with a milestone first flight. The next challenge is a test flight from Kemble to an airport in Hampshire, on their mission to get CAA certification by the close of this year, and to power zero-emission commercial aircraft by 2025.

Roads – After travelling elsewhere in the country, it is obvious when you are back in Gloucestershire – exit any junction from any motorway in the county and you are immediately bouncing along pothole riven roads. Following my petition to our two local MPs, they have both written to the Transport Minister to ask for a review of the Highways Act 1980, which gives councils a ‘get out of jail’ card to refuse claims for damaged wheels if they meet certain criteria – mainly an annual inspection of the road. They have also written to the Chief Executive at GCC to ask what they are doing about the state of our roads. Meanwhile, I am about to start legal proceedings against GCC in support of my own claim.