

## **Minutes of the Guiting Power Parish Meeting**

**23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall**

Councillors Present: Simon Gardner (Chair) / Simon Wallis (Vice Chair) / Samantha Ayton-Hill / Richard Knee / Charlie Friend / Neil Smith / Fiona Formby

Presenters Present: County Councillor Mark Mackenzie-Charrington / District Councillor Len Wilkins / Reverend Catherine Cowie / Mike Byrant / Probyn Myers

Residents Present: 5 residents present

Apologies: Jane Carter (Clerk)

### **Welcome by the Parish Council Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed all in attendance to the Parish meeting and explained that the meeting would start with a number of reports from groups and organisations around the village, followed by an open forum for any questions or queries, and an opportunity to raise any matters of concern for the Parish.

### **To receive Reports**

The following reports were presented or read out:

#### **Parish Council Chairman (verbal update):**

Councillor Gardner read out his Chairman's report as follows.

The Guiting Power Parish Council continues to meet around every 2 months. Jane our efficient Clerk keeps us on the straight and narrow with all the correct procedures and current legislation which is always changing with our legal and legislative requirements.

The Parish Council has had a busy 12 months with many discussions and projects, some ongoing and some past and finished. We recently oversaw some repair work and upgrades in the playground with repairs under warranty and some wear and tear replacements carried out on the zip wire. Some of the costs were kindly covered by the Guiting Power Social Group and some by the installation company as the frame was still under warranty. Some more sand was added to the sand pit recently and some branch trimming done around the zip wire area. The sand was purchased a while ago under a "Build Back Better Fund" from Councillor Mark Mackenzie-Charrington as well as some replacement swing seats, the Council is always diligent and keen to use as many funds and grants available to help projects in the Parish. The benches in the playground are hopefully about to undergo a good clean as well when the weather allows and the kind volunteers get time to do so. New goal posts have also arrived in the playground with some local children doing fund raising to help some of the purchase costs towards them, they are a great addition and are always being used whenever I go past in the evenings.

We are currently working on a project to restore the posts and chain that used to surround the village war memorial. Recently some damage has been occurring to the memorial with people sitting on it so hopefully this should help ease the problem. We are working from historic pictures to restore them best we can to how it originally looked all those years ago.

Shortly we have a new white lining project going to go ahead throughout the village square and this will be done in conjunction with a remapping of the parking spaces outside the post office. This will hopefully make the spaces much more efficient and easier to use as well as map out the no parking/keep clear areas much better. This project has been undertaken by liaising between the Parish Council and the Guiting Amenity Trust. We are very aware that parking in and around the square is quite troubling but hopefully this will ease the problem a little. The parking will always be an issue in the square as after all it is a narrow Cotswold village with many very successful and great local businesses which help support the village and provide employment in the community and we hope continue to do so in the future. We will continue to explore options as we go forward to help ease the problems further, but please be patient as these things do take time.

We have looked at putting more bins in and around the village, but unfortunately the refuse collection are currently at full stretch and cannot service any extra bins so again we are working on possible solutions going forward.

We are planning a Defibrillator training session in the Village Hall on a Saturday morning along with some basic first aid training also provided. The Parish Council will fund this as well as help put it on as it's always good to be up together to help each other in these rural communities. The defibrillator maintenance and inspections again are carried out by the Parish Council and also with help kindly from the tenants of the Guesthouse in the village.

The Annual Christmas Tree was as splendid as ever in the square this year and a credit to our great village, with the very kind donations from all over the local Parish funding the tree and decorations, drinks and refreshments and of course Father Christmas and his presents and last but not least his modern Land Rover and sleigh.

Another project we are looking into is some more curbing in the village square to help tidy up and define the edge of the village green, this is proving a little challenging with getting contractors able to do the work but we hopefully will get there in the future , all of these things do take time.

The Parish Council will I hope continue to serve the village in its best capacity and hear anything that the villagers wish to report or suggest so we can deal with their issues whatever they may be. We will continue to work with all the local groups and organisations, the Church, the Cheery Club and Social Group but to name a few in helping the village continue to be the great place it is. I'd like to thank Jane our Clerk who as I've already said keeps us in order and up to date, no easy task with all that

is required of Council's. Thank you to the keen and enthusiastic group of Councillors who help in all areas of the Parish Council dealing with all sorts of issues when they come to the fore, it is their kind donation of time and skills which help keep our lovely village/parish as it is. It is always a difficult balancing act to keep things as they are with our tight budget, but with the help of all the kind donations we get in time and money it does make things a little easier. Finally thank you to Councillors Len Wilkins and Mark Mackenzie-Charrington for their continued support and advice.

There are many other things that we help with through the year in the village and I apologise if I've left any out that are particularly important to those concerned but I think I've gone on enough now so thank you all for coming this evening.

**District Councillor Len Wilkins (verbal update):**

Councillor Wilkins gave thanks for his successful election in May.

Cotswold District Council, like all District Council's has had problems with finance, due to this, rates increased by over 4% in April. The green bin licence has also increased.

The Council has had an interesting year, one of the big changes has been to the planning system, the previous company, Publica is being split up and so the Council have outsourced to a new company. Noted that there has been an increase in planning costs and a change to timescales for applications. Once a planning application is validated on the new planning system there are 28 days to comment. Ask to residents – if there are any concerns with planning applications please contact the Parish Clerk or Cllr Wilkins.

Issues such as graffiti, dog fouling, street cleaning can now be reported on the Cotswold District Council website, the area can be identified using a 'pin' on a map or What3words. Link [here](#)

Probyn asked who was responsible for clearing the grills in the roads that allow the waste water to be taken away, noting that they were getting blocked up very quickly. The Chairman advised that this had been raised at a recent Parish Council meeting. The drains normally get cleared twice a year.

Councillor Smith asked what was being done in relation to fly tipping. Councillor Wilkins advised that the District Council had identified main areas, if fly tipping happens twice in the same location the Council put a camera in place. Fly tipping fines have now increased from £400 now £1,000. Noted that fines for Graffiti offenses had also increased.

**County Councillor Mark Mackenzie-Charrington (verbal update):**

Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington has been a County Councillor for 3 years, with another year to go before the next election. Whilst the District Council tend to deal with the more immediate and local things, Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington's brief is county wide and covers 20 different communities in the Stow division. The County

Council covers different areas of activity such as quarries, infrastructure, highways, schools waste disposal (but not collection). Noted that Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington is chair of the County Council's Planning Committee. The Council have been investing in waste disposal and have a new 'Energy from Waste' facility at Javelin Park. This is an incineration plant that hosts the latest technology in waste disposal. In the last financial year the facility has begun to pay back and produced a profit of £15m. The money made is through generating electricity from waste.

The new budget for the County Council is £616m. About 65% of this goes on social services. Councillor Mackenzie Charrington sits on 9 different committees, quite a lot of these involve children and families, including school transport which costs the county about £7m a year.

Over the last 3 years Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington was tasked with reviewing the quarry arrangements and has been battling to get the area around here (group of 9 quarries) recognised legally as a 'cluster'. In planning law clusters have to be acknowledged. The effect quarrying has on communities can be devastating - dust, ruined verges, stones fallen out of overladen trucks, damaged roads etc. The size of the trucks that go to and from quarries has increased, with some up to about 35 tonnes being used. The impact of these can be seen on the roads for example the state of the road by Twiston-Davies. At a local level Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington has funds available each year to contribute towards repairing roads, highways, pavements etc and tries to contribute to any improvements villages need such as the white linking in Guiting Power village square. There is also a "Build Back Better" fund available which has previously contributed towards the sand for the playground.

As a board member for Gloucestershire Pension Fund there is a big responsibility to administer the fund which is worth three and a quarter billion pounds. The Council are drawing this in through contributions from employees and employers, more than it is being drawn out.

**Village Hall Committee** (written report provided by Neil Rimmer, read out by Cllr Richard Knee)

The village hall is an important community facility which requires constant attention. The years have taken their toll on the building and it is now need of some major work. Bookings are increasing steadily but, to keep up with current demands & attract new business, we need to dedicate time & money to refurbishment. The committee is very grateful to the Social Group who have now named the Hall as its principal beneficiary. The two groups have created a joint team who are developing a plan of action. This will include renovation of the main areas of the hall including the toilets, the kitchen and the heating system. We will apply for any grants that may be available to benefit the hall. We are always looking for volunteers to help develop & maintain the hall so, if you can give any time and/or experience, contact [gpvh@guitingevents.co.uk](mailto:gpvh@guitingevents.co.uk).

**Guiting Power Social Group** (written report provided by Dawn Rimmer, read out by Cllr Neil Smith)

The social group is going from strength to strength. Following another very successful pantomime where we raised £2000 for the village hall, we held a bingo night where around 50 locals enjoyed an evening of games, fun & prizes!

We are now gearing up for the village fete & fun dog show where we will have another RAF fly past together with a show of Classic Cars. There will be the usual stalls, games, BBQ & bar.

Now the playground is complete (apart from ongoing maintenance which we will continue to fund), we have agreed to dedicate the majority of our fundraising in the next few years to the financial support of the village hall. It is a vital asset to the community but needs constant repair & updating so it was felt to be currently the best recipient of our resources. We are always looking for new talent so please visit the Guiting Events website to find our contact details.

**Cotswold Friends – Mike Byrant (verbal update)**

On behalf of Cotswold Friends Mike put out an ask for volunteers, explaining that the charity is in need of more volunteers because it is expanding so quickly. The main objective of Cotswold Friends is the alleviation of loneliness and isolation in older parts of communities. Cotswold Friends offer rest bite, home visits and transport which is a big part of what they do, the transport supports people getting to doctors appointments, dentist appointments etc. If you or someone you know would like to utilise our transport to get you to social events or medical appointments then you can call us on 01608 651 415. To provide transport services Cotswold Friends are desperately in need of more drivers.

There are currently 12 lunch clubs that Cotswold Friends run around the Cotswolds, in Guiting Power they meet at The Farmers Arms on the second Tuesday of each month for a special fixed price lunch menu, this activity is a big thing for individuals living on their own. Please call the Community Activities line 01608 692881 to book your place or to find out further

Cotswold Friends would love to hear from anyone interested in giving some time (as much or as little as wanted) to any aspect of volunteering with the charity.

Recommendation to visit the Cotswold Friends website to see the full list of things they do, see [here](#)

**St Michael & All Angels Church - Reverend Catherine Cowie (verbal update)**

Reverend Catherine Cowie is the Curate in the village and has attended the Parish Council meeting to speak on behalf of the church, with notes kindly provided by Reverend Katrina Scott.

St Michaels & All Angels Church works well as part of a benefice (7 church buildings in the local area), in the last year there has been a little bit of change to structures to

work much more as a benefice. There are more team meetings to share stories and knowledge which hopefully means more time and energy is being put forward.

In terms of clergy news, Reverend Cowie has recently been on maternity leave, she shared what a joy it had been to have been on maternity leave in this place. She has enjoyed chatting to people whilst walking through the village. Reverend Cowie has been here in a training role, her time will be coming to an end imminently in the next 3-6 months. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) are incredible and those who work tirelessly to bring life to St Michaels. Reverend Cowie expressed what a joy it is to be ministers in Guiting Power and what a special place it is to be. Incredible appreciation and thanks given to those that attend church regularly and those within the village who know there are church services going on. There is a real Christian presence within our communities, and it is really important to have that Christian leadership and presence within this place.

As a benefice there continue to be lots of events such as Baptisms, weddings, funerals etc. Noted that the funerals in Guiting Power are incredibly well attended. Thanks given to those who do so much to look after the church building and the churchyard, there have been so many lovely comments received. Feedback has also been received on the church loo, on how incredibly useful it is. The Church continues to have really good links with our church school in Temple Guiting which is served by a bus (provided by the council) which a number of families use, this is a wonderful village asset. There continues to be a lot going on across the benefice and specifically in Guiting Power, there is a bible Group led by Jean, prayer groups and a lot of other wonderful things going on in addition to the church services which happen at least twice a month.

Continue to find stewardship an issue. All feeling the pinch of the cost of living, church expenses continue to go up and we continue to explore how we make sure that the church is still here in another 1000 years. Events to support our communities have taken place including our warm spaces, particularly in Guiting Power where these have been well received, huge thanks to the village for all those who have helped to make the events such a success. They give people companionship, and a place to go to have a warm meal over the winter months. As a benefice we continue to work with outreach projects, last year this included some prison works, the benefice engaged with supporting those leaving prison. Support leaflets were distributed around the villages and churches to encourage engagement with the support networks we have, and to provide information on where to find financial health, mental health and all sorts of assets around Gloucestershire, providing all the information in one place so people know where to find it.

The Easter Fair event was such a treat and so well received especially by young people in the village. Thank you to all those that helped make the event so successful. The benefice have joined something called inclusive church, a network that is nationwide and focuses on increasing inclusivity in churches. Come one, come all, the church is a place of welcome and of nourishment. Thank you for all of

the support to St Michaels, on behalf of Katrina, Sue and Catherine, the Church it is always there, including the churchyard.

### **Music Festival – Probyn Myers (verbal update)**

Getting closer to the start of the music festival in July this year, had a very good year last year with about two thousand people attending the event over the 10 days it ran. It is hoped to exceed that number this year. There will be one very important large concert evening with an orchestra of 28 and some quite famous soloists who will be playing the same arrangement at the proms 4 days later. This year will be by far the biggest concert we have ever had with a wide variety of performers. There will be a well known Scottish singer, some jazz, some blues, an 8 piece band from Senegal and some classical music which is traditionally what we started with.

An ask for helpers which are needed for supervising the car parking, helpers for chairs which require putting in ready for the Sunday performances and out for the evening performances. Probyn is trying to gather together volunteers. Noted that for young people they offer £12 per hour. If interested or know of anybody that is please contact Probyn. Hope you enjoy concerts with the musicians this year, hope that these do not irritate anybody, noted the concerts are earlier than they used to be. Hope you come to enjoy the music.

### **Cheery Club (written report provided by Janet Boote, read by Cllr Fiona Formby)**

The Cheery Club was established in 1951 and is the longest running Club in the village. We now have a membership of 26, and have attracted members from other villages. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month in the afternoon for approximately two hours. We have a varied programme of events during the coming year including speakers on various subjects from “Don’t throw your rubbish away” to the Air Ambulance, a speaker from M.A.F and afternoon tea, a Christmas tea and Christmas lunch. We are very grateful for donations from local businesses and organisations which help us to keep going. We would welcome some new members, especially from the younger generation.

### **Village Newsletter (written report provided by Dawn Rimmer)**

The bi-annual newsletter, Guiting News, is published in spring & autumn funded by the Parish Council and is circulated to all properties within the parish. If anyone has been missed out, copies are usually available in the local shops & pubs. All local organisations & groups are encouraged to contribute. It is regularly 4 pages worth of local reports, events & announcements. If anyone would like to contribute, contact [rimmerdawn@icloud.com](mailto:rimmerdawn@icloud.com) for details

### **Open Gardens – Roland Green (verbal update)**

Roland advised that this years Open Gardens event would be held on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June from 1:00pm – 5:30pm. There are 17 gardens to visit, best year had for enthusiasm.

## Open Forum

A resident asked whether the County Council would consider increasing the number of cleaning visits to the storm drains on the highway which get very silted up, noting that climate change was bringing increased rainfall. Councillor Mackenzie Charrington advised that the cleaning was carried out twice a year, he understands the problem, advising that it is the pipework underground linking the drains that gets blocked. A team go round with a machine to suck out the gullies, these are different to the people that come out with rods. There is a Council funded programme running over 4 years which is increasing the amount of researching into this. Gloucestershire County Council have invested in quite a lot of new equipment including for pot hole repairs, pot holes are the primary cause for blocking drains up when granules get swept down roads into the drains. Investment has been made in machines that take out sections of a road and relay the road rather than having to do fiddly repatching. Trialling of other types of road surface to provide longevity is also being tested. Noted that quite a lot of the material blocking drains comes from adjoining landowners not keeping ditches clear, meaning the muck stays on the road. Councillor Knee asked a point of clarification, when referencing the cleaning of gullies twice a year, was this for gulley suction or does it include rodding? Cllr Mackenzie-Charrington confirmed that rodding doesn't happen at all unless there is a problem. Suggested to ask the Clerk to send an email with some specifics on the problems with drains in Guiting Power and Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington will get this looked at. At the last Parish Council meeting the verge on the road up to Winchcombe was mentioned, the verge at the top had been trampled down and the road was standing above the verge. Cllr Mackenzie-Charrington confirmed that he had reported this on 'fix my street', an initial response has been received to confirm an officer had been out to look at the area and didn't think it was as bad as it had been made out to be. This is possibly due to the location not being accurate on 'fix my street', Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington will take photo's and would hope the area can be found. Councillor Ayton-Hill asked if reporting any issues more frequently would help to get them addressed. Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington advised that anybody could report these issues via the Gloucestershire County Council website [here](#)

A resident advised that since the covid pandemic Guiting Power has been noticed as a destination and is getting a lot of visitors, during hotter days the square is full of people walking. The resident shared the fear for pedestrians with the speed of cars coming through the centre of the village, particularly on the corner by The Old Post Office which was very dangerous. Speeds seem above 30mph. When driving through other villages the resident has seen that there are 20mph limits, is there any mechanism where we can apply for this? Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington advised that there was an option to apply for a Traffic Regulation order (TRO) which would probably take around 18 months, may take longer. Central government has said that residential areas should be 20mph. Another resident noted coming across people walking in the middle of the road often. A different resident asked if the 20mph zones in other villages had worked? Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington advised that a number of surveys had been carried out to evaluate the difference made. Councillor

Smith advised that the Parish Council had looked at and discussed a TRO and had been told these come at a cost of £10,000 for which the Parish Council could not justify the funding for. There were also objections against it, and recognition of the chances of a car getting up to 20mph. A survey was carried out recently and found that cars were not exceeding the speed limit. There is 1 accident that the Parish Council are aware of. Councillor Formby raised concerns from when she ran The Old Post Office having seen many near misses. A resident asked whether road bumps could help, Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington advised that these were a similar cost and different to a TRO process. Noted that Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington had a highways fund that may be able to contribute towards a TRO. A resident asked if this would apply to cyclists – it was confirmed that cyclists were not bound by speed limits.

A resident asked if the County Council were securing developer contributions e.g. Section 106 which could be used towards the upkeep of villages as part of quarry developments. Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington stated they were not, the County Council were dealing with existing quarries and not new developments, these quarries were unlikely to be given extensions. The quarries are part of historic situations.

Councillor Formby advised that she found it a little disparaging that only a few residents had attended the Parish meeting of their own volitions. Sharing fear for our community if we, as a collective could not get more people to meetings like this and to help with volunteering within the community. Guiting Power has always been a tight community. This concern was highlighted for local government and central government, noting she felt it was for councils to bring communities together and encourage residents to help service the communities they live in. Councillor Formby suggested we should all be working together to try to re-educate people and groups to help bring people together to support their communities. Councillor Mackenzie-Charrington advised that the County Council had invested in libraries, loneliness and isolation, social activities etc. however it is difficult to support communities of this size, observing that Guiting Power was not doing so badly. Councillor Ayton-Hill suggested the Parish Council could consider what more it could do at a local level and take on some of this responsibility. Councillor Gardner noted the challenge going forward of getting younger people involved, there is a different generation coming through, engaging with them and getting them involved is a challenge, not just for the Parish Council.

Reverend Catherine gave thanks, as resident and on behalf of husband for the joy it had brought them being in the village in temporary residence. Thanks given for everything we all do to make it such a wonderful village. Keep doing what you are doing, it does matter.

The Chairman gave thanks for all those that attended the meeting and took part in the discussions.

**Meeting closed at 20:56**