

GRETTON PARISH COUNCIL

Gretton, Corby, Northamptonshire.

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Please Note: These Minutes are posted before being ratified by the Parish Council and, as such, are in DRAFT form. Any amendments to them will appear in the following Annual Parish Meeting minutes.

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on **Monday 15th April 2024** at 7.00 pm.

Present: Chair of the Parish Council, Jacki Lilley, presided over the Meeting supported by five Parish Councillors, Clerk to the Parish Council

A Resident, Mr Forsey asked before the meeting commenced if he could raise a question: He stated that the Parish Council had recently shared in correspondence with him that we want people to adhere to the principles of practice of the legal process of following of best practice. Cllr Lilley agreed this was the case.

Mr Forsey read out a statement from the Department of Communities and Local Government best practice guidelines sharing “ The publication of the AGM agenda should be accompanied by all relevant background papers. This will encourage public participation and transparency. “ Mr Forsey stated that the National Association of Councils also supports this. Mr Forsey stated that he has the Agenda for this meeting but no supporting papers.

Cllr Lilley thanked Mr Forsey for the question and answered that the papers from the working groups had only been received in the last few days. She shared that there are already plans in place to review how the AGM meeting is run as the Parish Council are aware they have inherited a process that is probably not best practice. This will be added as an agenda item for the May Parish Council meeting. Cllr Lilley shared that papers can be made available to the resident after the meeting if required.

01/24 To receive the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 17th April 2023.

RESOLVED: The minutes were duly proposed and seconded to constitute an accurate record and approved by the persons present. The Chair signed the minutes.

02/24 To discuss any matters arising from the Minutes.

RESOLVED: No matters arising

03/24 To receive the Chair’s Annual Report.

RESOLVED: The following report was made:

I would like to present the following report on behalf of the Parish Council outlining activities and progress for the year 2023/24.

Due to a change in personal circumstances, our previous Clerk resigned, and we were delighted to have Chrissie Watts join us as the new clerk. The Clerk’s role is paramount to the smooth running of the Council. Chrissie has had a very steep learning curve and has risen well to the challenge of the financial and governance responsibilities given to her. She is helping us become more efficient and effective and works tirelessly to ensure that

both the residents and councillors are always kept fully informed. Thank you for your hard work and efforts Chrissie.

Regrettably Cllr Julie Smith resigned in January 2024 and after due process was followed, we are delighted to welcome on board Councillor Chris Turner to replace her. We are all looking forward to working with Chris and I am sure he will be an asset to the team.

The Parish Council were pleased to finance the celebrations for King Charles III Coronation. So many people contributed to making it a fun, successful event and we thank every person who was involved in bringing the village together to celebrate this momentous event.

Once again, we were delighted to support the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal at both Spanhoe Airfield and on the Village Green to mark Remembrance Day. The attendance at both these ceremonies continues to grow year on year and it is a pleasure to support such a worthy cause.

The Parish Council have supported the Friends of Gretton Recreation Ground through their project to install both an outdoor gym and a skate park. This is a huge achievement for the group– from the sourcing of funding to co-ordinating the installations – and the Parish Council are very grateful to all those who worked so hard, lost sleep and saw the project through to completion. It is hoped that residents will now be able to fully enjoy the equipment – assuming it ever stops raining of course.

This year we have formed a Nature Recovery Plan group. This is in its infancy and community engagement will be forthcoming over the summer. The first project undertaken on behalf of the Parish Council has been the refurbishment of Picks Playing Field so that it can be used by the Gretton Primary Academy’s Forest School. Funding was obtained from the Rockingham Forest Vision project. A big thank you to those who have made this happen – it is an encouraging start for such a small group.

The Highways Working Group have been working hard through the year. The “20’s Plenty” campaign is now embedded in the village and many signs have been set up around the village to remind us of the advisory 20mph limit. A working group spent three weeks working with mobile speed cameras to monitor traffic around the village, and another exercise is due this month. The group have also had meetings with NNC and Highways to discuss the viability of implementing traffic calming measures identified in the survey undertaken in the village. They have been successful in getting permission for yellow lines to be extended along the Kirby/Corby Road junction and now await the implementation of this by Highways. The group are also working on having extra TVAS cameras set up on the Haringworth Road and Station Road entrances to the village. Data from these and the current TVAS camera on Corby Road will be analysed to help the group get continued support from NNC and Highways to implement traffic calming measures over the coming years.

The Parish Council approved its Community Resilience Plan, and this was presented to residents at the Village Hall. We are grateful to Darren Dovey who prepared the Plan on

our behalf, using his wealth of knowledge gained from many years in the Fire Service. The Plan is available on the Parish Council website.

The Parish Council website is now available and is currently going through a process of being updated and improved. Cllr Blamire has taken on the role of being our social media correspondent and has plans and ideas for improving our resident communications.

We have continued to give financial support to the Welland Wanderer Bus Service over the past year. In addition, Cllr Husk has co-ordinated several Community Minibus one-off day trips. These have proven to be very successful and are enjoyed by those who make use of them. Over the coming year it will be important that as many residents as possible continue to make use of the bus service. The more use made of the bus service, the more chance we have of keeping it.

We are pleased to continue to support the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, and Trevor Smith has a role as our Police Liaison Officer on the Parish Council. Trevor has been fundamental in raising the profile of the group and arranged for the Northants Police Beat Bus to be present in the village several times over the year. The WhatsApp group is a great way of keeping in touch and villagers use it to communicate together when there might be “suspicious” activity. This is a great way of watching out for each other.

The Gretton Good Neighbours Scheme has been very successful over the year. Several events have been held, such as the Skills Cafes, Crafting afternoons and a games afternoon. These were all well received and most enjoyable. The group has been able to support residents by taking them to medical appointments, delivering packages and clearing a garden.

Gretton Life magazine is a primary source of communication for many groups in the village. It is published three times a year and distributed by the councillors. The magazine requires a new editor, and the Parish Council would be most grateful if volunteers would step forward to help.

The common thread running through all the work achieved this year is that we are heavily dependant upon the work of volunteers – whether they are councillors or villagers. The Parish Council gives as much financial support as it can, but the actual physical work is done by people who willingly give their time to make Gretton an inclusive, happy, and friendly community within which to live. Thank you to everyone who gives their time selflessly for others.

Historically, the Parish Council has been able to keep the precept for the village at a relatively low rate in comparison to parishes of similar sizes but, unfortunately, with changes in local government and reorganisation together with overall increases in costs it has become apparent that this is no longer sustainable and hence the Parish Council have had to make a difficult decision to increase the precept from £26,880 to £40,000 for 2024 – 2025. Whilst the percentage increase seems high, it is worth noting that the Precept is still only 3% of the overall Council Tax Bill.

The Precept is our main source of income and Gretton Parish Council has taken the decision to increase the Precept this year to make provision for known financial commitments. Over the last few years, we have all experienced price hikes for utilities, insurance, wages, cost of materials and maintenance etc., and the Parish Council has also been impacted by these. Where possible the Parish Council attains grant funding for larger projects.

The Parish Council will continue to review the precept in future years in line with its obligations to the community, the responsibility to undertake maintenance and upkeep of community facilities and amenities, including known requirements for essential repairs and improvements, the necessity to balance the Parish Council finances, and to safeguard them for the future.

05/24 To receive the audited accounts of Gretton Parish Council to 31st March 2023
RESOLVED: Accounts approved and noted.

06/24 To receive the accounts of Gretton Village Hall to 31st December 2023
RESOLVED: Accounts approved and noted.

07/24 To receive a financial report from Gretton Pocket Park Society
RESOLVED: Accounts approved and noted.

09/24 To receive the accounts of Gretton Cricket Club
RESOLVED: Accounts approved and noted.

10/24 To receive the accounts of Gretton Sports and Social Club
RESOLVED: Accounts approved and noted.

11/24 To receive a financial report from Gretton Good Neighbourhood Scheme
Cllr Lilley shared the report received: There are now 19 members, there were 11 meetings held in 2023 all minuted, In 2023 there were 3 skills cafes, 2 warm hubs a games afternoon and a crafting workshop. Various support provided throughout the village. Flyers are currently being made to promote the service within the village and regular updates will appear in the Gretton life.
RESOLVED: Accounts approved and Noted

*Cllr Lilley Opened up an Open Forum for any questions from the Public
Mr Forsey raised the question why does the asset register not include the village hall.
Cllr Fox answered that the Village Hall is owned by the Village Hall Management Committee and not the Parish Council so it is not a Parish Council Asset. The Parish Council are Custodian Trustees. The Village Hall is a community asset. It could not be sold by any one entity.
Mr Forsey raised the question "The Sports and Social Club lease is due for renewal next year, is the intention that it is to continue as such? The reason for these two questions was a rumour that the Village Hall was going to be sold for houses and the Sports and Social Clubs to be extended to add a function room.
Cllr Lilley confirmed that the Parish Council have no intention to do either of these two things raised by Mr. Forsey.
A committee member for the Village Hall asked if there was any specific requirement from the various organisations to be on the Parish Council.
Cllr Lilley confirmed that anybody can be on the Parish Council if they put themselves forward. She shared that all the Councillors remained objective and adhere to the Nolan*

principles at any meeting and if there is any conflict of interest, they are asked to declare it and not take part in any voting or discussion if there is a conflict of interest.

A committee member from the Village Hall asked on the reporting process going forward on report detail from the minutes being made available to view?

Cllr Lilley shared that where possible they will be published in full. We are limited on this due to them being shared in small notice boards. Anyone enquiring can see these reports. Cllr Fox shared that the Parish Council have improved the reporting detail over the last few months

Mr. Forsey raised that Agendas are issued with reports requests. When the meeting is minuted and reports received from the Councillors the residents do not see what is on these reports.

Cllr Lilley shared that generally the minutes contain the full report from the Councillors. Occasionally the reports can be long and cannot be included fully in the minutes.

A resident raised the point that this did not happen with the precept. They shared that the amount was not shared on the Agenda or the Minutes and the first time it was made available to the public was on receipt of Council Tax bills arriving in their homes.

Cllr Lilley accepted these comments and shared that the parish Council are looking to improve the way we work. She shared that the members of th Parish Council are doing their best and continually strive to improve.

Cllr Lilley thanked everyone for attending

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Signed: _____

Jacki Lilley

Chair, Gretton Parish Council.