

## Newnham on Severn Parish Council

Notes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2017 at 7pm in the Armoury Hall, Newnham on Severn – Page 1

### Notes from the Parish meeting of 19<sup>TH</sup> April 2016

The notes of the previous meeting were circulated.

#### To receive the report of the Chairman

Cllr Walker welcomed those present to the meeting and re enforced the fact that this was an informal meeting where no standing orders applied.

**2016** had been a busy one for council and a number of projects were undertaken. Progress of which was often covered in the Newsletter and on the much improved web site. Both medias greatly improving the communications in the village.

**Budget** – the budget set for the financial year had generally been met with a number of projects being added and completed. All additional expenditure had been vired into the budget as and when necessary. The coming year's budget had been set and the precept of £28,500 had been maintained at the same level as when originally set in 2011. However, an increase was apparent in the overall council tax bills. This is caused by the further reduction and now eradication of the central government grant system. Councillors shared the frustration of the parishioners that this appears as an increase in their bills. Now that the grant has disappeared completely future tax levels will not be affected in this way.

**Grass cutting** – Centigen who won the grass tender process in 2015 for 2016 – 2019 had formally withdrawn from the contract and re quoted at a significantly higher rate. As a result council after considering their quote against one from Complete Gardeners (the previous contractor) had awarded the contract to Complete. Although frustrating at least the village had benefitted from the very low original contract level charged by Centigen during their first year.

**Parking** – Cllrs Firman & O'Leary have been working hard on parking issues having conducted a survey and gathering the views of many. A number of suggested projects have been identified and further consultation will take place. All involved recognise that the cost of many proposals are prohibitive at the current time.

**Highways** – Working relationships with Highways are good and regular meetings take place to identify issues and improve village infrastructure. However, budget constraints are a constant issue. The speed sign recently purchased using S106 monies from Sheens Meadow will be operational soon, once the two remaining poles have been installed.

**Old Bus shelter** – This has now been turned into an information point for use by the village (not the council) to post general notices.

**The Clerk** – Cllr Walker congratulated the Clerk on obtaining his CiLCA qualification which enabled the council to consider obtaining the general power of competence and other quality council awards, further demonstrating the desire of council to be one of the best organised in the county.

**The Green** – Further works to open up pathways, repair the bridge and mount information boards relating to the ringworks and the civil war fort are being considered. They will require grant funding for them to be viable. This is being pursued via the Environmental Trust who in the past have supported work on the clock tower.

**Casual vacancy** – Finally following the resignation of Cllr Anderson a casual vacancy exists. There being no requests for an election the position would be filled via co option at the April PC meeting.

**To receive the Financial report of the Council for Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.**

- The Clerk circulated a financial report for the full year along with the Outlooks for 2017/18. The Council's finances are in good order with over £35K being available capital as of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 although £13K of this is reserved for specific projects. The Outlook for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 is an available reserve of £17K after accounting for ring fenced monies for future elections/clock maintenance and the £10K set aside for the burial ground acquisition. The outlooks were prepared prior to Centigen's withdrawal from the grass cutting contract and as a result approx £5K extra has been added to the year's expenditure. Council would at the June finance meeting review the budget as set in an attempt to reduce the expenditure to compensate.

**Internal Audit** – The clerk advised that the annual internal audit had been completed that morning with no major deficiencies identified. The report would be discussed in detail at the April meeting.

**To receive County Council and District Council reports.**

There were no reports made.

**Public Consultation.**

A number of subjects were covered. Recognising that **financials** were tight and careful budgeting required, it was suggested that council held some money set aside for projects particularly for the disabled and general benefit of the village and possibly the Armoury Hall, which council had already granted £5K to several years ago along with a similar sum for shelving in the library. The chair advised that this was already done and additional money if required and available was vired into the budget.

**The allocations plan** and the proposal to build 100 houses at the north of the village was discussed at length. It was generally agreed that arguing against the proposals were very difficult. The planning system within FoDDC does not appear well structured.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.**