

OVER HADDON PARISH

Council Chairman: Roger Truscott

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The Annual Parish Meeting was held at 7:30pm on Monday 11th March 2024 in Over Haddon Village Hall

Minutes

Attendance: 9 electors and 4 non-electors

1. Appointment of the Clerk to the meeting

The meeting appointed the Parish Clerk to take the minutes

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from PCSO Boswell, County Councillor Alasdair Sutton and Cllr Roger Truscott

3. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Monday 13th March 2023 were approved.

4. Chair's Report – read by the Vice-Chair Cllr Zena Hawley

Councillors this year have included myself as chair, together with Zena Hawley (vice-chair) and Sally Mosley, who remained in place from the previous year. However, councillors Penny Aitken and Steve Pope both resigned at the end of the 2022-23 year, and I would like to express my thanks to both of them for all the work they did – and indeed still do in a less official way – for this parish council and community. I am pleased to say that we have been able to welcome two new councillors – Joe Oldfield and Tim Walton – so we returned to our full quota of five councillors very quickly! Mathew Lovell has remained in post this year as our parish clerk, and again we thank him for all of his hard work. I am sad, therefore, to have to report that he has tendered his resignation, as from May 2024, and hope that we will be able to replace him with a suitable candidate by that date. We will, nevertheless, greatly miss him for his efficiency, great experience and good humour in dealing with us and the problems which our little parish throw up!

Car Park and Public Toilets:

This remains a contentious issue between ourselves and the Derbyshire Dales District Council, both because the parish council is still paying for the regular cleaning of the toilets, in order to keep them open all year round, despite this never having been our agreed responsibility, and because the car park is rarely anything like fully occupied, even when village streets are filled with cars parked by visitors, causing obstruction. This results partly from the difficulties which motorists have using the car park payment machines and partly from the cost of parking. As a parish council we feel that we could run both of these important amenities for visitors to the village and the dale more efficiently, provided we were able to use the car park revenue in order to pay for it. There were initial indications that the new political control of the district council would prove more amenable to our suggestions but this has not yet produced any positive results.

Highways and Traffic:

We continue to lobby Derbyshire County Council, as Highways authority, to repair potholes, and to try to convince them that the lower ginnel should have a "No Through Road" sign, without avail. However, with little notice, a team of contractors arrived on the 30th of September and quickly covered Main Street, between Bakewell Road and the green triangle, with a rather rough coat of tarmac. However, not only did this avoid the worst potholes but it covered over nearly all the fire hydrants and maintenance covers in Main Street! Loud protests resulted in them having to send another team to uncover the hydrants, etc., and to carry out a little extra pothole filling...

Allotments:

This is far and away the largest bloc of land in parish council ownership and is currently operating very satisfactorily, with all plots taken, bar one which is still recovering from excess weed growth.

Community Garden (the Thurlby Garden):

This public amenity garden, for the use of locals and visitors alike, at the junction of Main Street and Wellgate Lane, was finally completed in the Spring, with the construction of an access path and protective fence and erection of an information board. An official opening took place on the 29th of May, attended by a large number of parishioners. The contributions of all parish councillors and clerks, present and former, of the Derby Community College, of Jeff Sheldon for the pathway, of the "Wombles", led by Steve Pope and of Tim Walton for the seating, were all commended. It was especially apposite that Marge Thurby, in her 90th year, the oldest village resident and senior member of the Thurlby family, cut the ribbon to open the garden.

Defibrillator:

The new defibrillator, paid for by the Village Hall Management Committee and to be maintained by the Parish Council, was installed outside the entrance to the village hall at the beginning of the year. This means we now have one at each end of the village and they will, hopefully, contribute to greater security, should an emergency need arise in our village in the future.

Neighbourhood Watch:

A working party was established early in the year, which included councillor Hawley as the parish council representative, to consider replacement of the former Over Haddon Neighbourhood Watch system with an updated version, and a public meeting to discuss its recommendations will shortly take place in the village hall.

Lathkil Dale:

A number of issues have been brought to our attention during the course of the year concerning conditions in the dale, including tree felling (and leaving some to lie in the river), footpath maintenance (or lack of it) especially when flooding is a problem, and the continued use of Dale Road/the ford and the path up to Meadow Place by off-road motor bikes and four-wheel drive vehicles (despite this now being declared a bridleway). We have been, and are, in discussion with both Natural England and the County Council over these issues.

Planning Applications:

The consideration of planning applications within the parish, resulting in our recommendations to the local planning authority, the Peak Park Planning Board, is a regular item for the agenda of parish council meetings. None of them during the past year have proved to be particularly contentious. Probably the most significant one was an application for a permanent new dwelling for Netherfield Farm, to the east of the village.

Village Embellishment:

It was agreed, during the course of the year, to carry out a series of initiatives to improve the visual appearance of the village by such measures of bulb planting, the erection of hanging baskets and the enhancement of signs at both the Bakewell Road and Monyash Road entrances to the village. Accordingly, bulbs were planted at selected sites around the village in the Autumn, and the results are now making a welcome appearance. Further work will be carried out during 2024.

Finger Posts and public benches:

It was agreed at the last meeting of the year that two new “finger posts,” intended mainly for walkers, should be installed, one at the junction of Main Street/Bakewell Road/School Lane, and the other at the green triangle at the top of Dale Road. Local amenities, including the village hall, the pub, the church, the playground, the car park the public toilets and Lathkil Dale, would be indicated. It was also agreed to consider the replacement of public benches which fallen into disrepair (or collapsed entirely) such as on Dale Road and in the churchyard. Both of these are expected to be initiatives for the 2024/25 year.

Roger Truscott (Chair 2023-24)

5. Report from representatives of County, District, Police, PDNPA attending

PCSO Boswell attended and will be returning on Thursday to join the Neighbourhood Watch meeting. He noted crime was increasing with a spate of burglaries and shed break ins in the Hope Valley and advised looking at security of buildings and outbuildings – strengthening doors, padlocks, alarms and CCTV. Their priorities are dictated by the Derbyshire Talking Survey which repeats every 3 months and whilst the Road Safety – especially ticketing vehicles parked where there are solid white lines in the middle of the highway remains number one, fear of burglary has been added for this quarter and the SNT are visiting as many parishes as possible to offer advice and hear concerns. The SNT welcomes invites to all coffee mornings and events to listen to resident concerns.

Both of our District Councillors Gareth Gee and newly elected Bob Butcher were welcomed to the meeting and Cllr Gee noted that the issues regarding homes becoming 2nd or holiday have taken a first step in limiting with the agreement to double 2nd home council tax from 2025. There is also an investigation into toilet blocks in honeyspots but whether Over Haddon is on the list is not known yet. Both councillors joined in the discussion below.

6. To consider items already requested for discussion:

Car Park and Toilet Block

Parishioners raised the state of the DDDC run Car Park and the observations over the last 3 years by those living facing it that have noted the poor use and deteriorating conditions. It is considered “not fit for purpose” being mostly empty due to the machines either being jammed and not taking cash or the lack of signal making it impossible to pay thus ensuring our street are overcrowded by visitors cars parking inappropriately for fear of penalties for not displaying a ticket. The proposal from the floor is that the parish acquire the car park and toilet block for the village which can be run efficiently using an honesty box system to finance the cleaning and repairs. Consideration could be given to moving the play area from the village hall especially for ball games where its steep slope to the road is a potential hazard by taking 8 car park spaces at the bottom of the car park to widen the grass area. Other possibilities for reworking the internal space for the toilet block to accommodate not only ladies/gents disabled but also a community shop/café create a space that benefits both parishioners and visitors.

Councillor Gee noted the DDDC Car Park review briefing this Thursday evening at the Town Hall and that he would speak on our behalf to support giving the parish council both car park and toilet block.

7. To consider any other Parish matter that may be brought forward by the Council or local government electors

No further matters were raised and the meeting closed at 8:07 pm