

# Sibford Gower

## Annual Parish Meeting

Notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May @ 6:30pm in Sibford Village Hall

Present: Cllr J Noquet, Cllr Berks, Cllr Garstin, Cllr G Noquet, Cllr Downes, Clerk, 4 members of the public, District and County Cllr George Reynolds.

1. Welcome, apologies and introduction – The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting.
2. Report from Parish Council Chairman - I'd like to thank Kirsty our clerk for her support over the past year. Kirsty is an important member of our team and we are lucky to have her on board.

In the last year the council has seen significant change with all but 1 of the previous councillors choosing not to stand for re-election. This resulted in 3 councillors being elected unopposed – Cllr Jackie Noquet, Cllr Alan Berks, and Cllr Geoff Noquet, who then co-opted Cllr James Garstin, and Cllr Andrew Downes. The 4 new councillors have had a lot to learn about all of the areas the Parish Council is responsible for and is involved in managing such as the burial ground, grass cutting contracts including the Millennium Field, verges, and the Miriam Tebbs land, and nomination of new members to the Town Estates Charity.

The main items of note from 2022-23 are:

- Speeding continues to be an area of concern to both villages and Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris Parish Councils have put out a note as a last ditch attempt to get together a Speedwatch Group. We are pleased to say that 8 people have come forward to volunteer (2 from Sibford Gower and 6 from Sibford Ferris so we could really do with more volunteers from the Gower if anyone is interested in signing up?). There are a number of 'hoops' the group has to jump through before they can start running Speedwatch sessions and there may be issues with minimum numbers required to formally register the group. We are hopeful that the group can organise a meeting soon and work out the next steps to see how to take it forward.
- Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2040 – The draft version of the final consultation document looked promising for the Sibfords as it included the recategorising of the villages to 'small villages', something that both parish councils have been requesting from CDC for some time. Unfortunately the District Council's Executive resolved to defer the consideration of the document to a later date which at the date of writing is still to be published. We hope that this will remain the case for the next version of the document but time will tell.
- The year end accounts have been audited with no issues raised. The budget for 2023-24 was agreed with no increase in the precept for this financial year.
- I have been advised by Highways that the road to the surgery is to be resurfaced but they can't give a date.
- The recent Coronation Celebrations were funded by Sibford Gower Parish Council, Sibford Ferris Parish Council, Cherwell District Council, The National Lottery Fund, and the Town Estates Charity. The event was a great success and on behalf of the full council I would like to thank all those who put in so much hard work to organise the event. As part of the

Coronation Celebrations Sibford Gower Parish Council agreed to put in a Wildflower Meadow (with as much red, white, and blue as possible!) in an area of the Burial Ground that won't be required for burials for quite some time and we were successful in obtaining a grant of £1k towards this from The National Lottery Fund. This will create a pleasant space for quiet contemplation for use by parishioners whilst also improving biodiversity in the area. Unfortunately it was not possible to get the wildflower meadow completed in time for the Coronation Celebrations but we look forward to seeing it develop over the coming months and years.

- The Reverend Neil is moving as of next month and we wish him well in his new role as Priest in charge (Rector Designate) of The Priory Church of St Mary, Bridlington.

- 3. Public forum – parishioners are welcome to raise any issues they wish to discuss subject to remaining time available – Cllr Reynolds advised that he will try to chase Highways re the road up past the surgery as at the moment he has been told it won't be done until 2024/25 but he feels the road won't be there by 2024/25 if it is not repaired before then.**