

COTON IN THE ELM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8TH May 2024
Held in Coton in the Elms Community Centre

Present: Cllr K Bradford (Chairman), Cllr C Bradford, Cllr Kinson, Cllr Lang, Cllr Leech
SDDC Cllr Wheelton.

Clerk Sue Hughes

Public attendees - 2

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Minutes of the previous meeting held on May 10th 2023 were circulated before the meeting, taken as read and signed as a true copy. A copy will be shared for advertising and will be posted on the website

2 . No matters arising

3. Chairman Report

It has been another busy year for the village starting with the Coronation of King Charles III celebrated in style, thanks once again to efforts of many residents and co-ordinated by Village Bloom.

Whilst a Judicial Review relieved anxieties concerning the proposed solar development at Lullington, we are now facing the prospect of an even larger development with the Oaklands site. With the help of a local resident, Parish Council produced information which was delivered to every household in the village highlighting concerns, and we hope that those who wished to comment were able to do so within the time limit imposed. We also collaborated with neighbouring Parish Councils in Rosliston and Walton and shared information via social media.

The brook project continues to develop. It is fair to say that some negative comments have been made about the initial visual impact.

However, it was good to see that despite exceptionally heavy rain over many months the brook was able to cope with the raised water levels.

Mark Horton passed away recently. Mark initially worked alongside his brother Barry as Trelawn Services, and continued on his own after Barry's retirement. He was a regular sight mowing the green. Barry and Mark had worked for the village for over 30 years and we are sad to see the end of this era.

Last year also saw the sad passing of Margaret Parkes. Margaret, together with her late husband Aubrey, worked tirelessly for the village and the community centre and is greatly missed.

There has been a slight change to Parish Council which has seen the departure of Cllr Jim Heaven and the arrival of Cllr Jim Antcliffe. Thanks to Jim Heaven for his contribution to PC over the past few years and welcome to Jim Antcliffe.

I would like to thank our County and District Councillors for attending our

meetings and village events, and for raising our concerns with their respective Authorities.

Last but certainly not least thanks to my fellow councillors and our clerk, Sue.

4. District Councillor Amy Wheelton report

It continues to my privilege and honour to serve as District Councillor for Seales Ward, I continue to put residents first and work cross party with all parties. I have and will continue to attend everything I can locally, and endeavour to keep you updated. As you are aware from my updates I have and am currently personally involved in many issues not even in my remit from planning, appeals, infrastructure, Coron Brook and traffic issues, catching fly tipping individuals, the environment, increasing biodiversity and climate change. This last year with resident power we showed together local democracy truly works winning the Lullington Solar Appeal and it being dismissed at Judicial review. I also plan to continue to raise awareness of Seales and the wider area, with the Police, DCC and getting better healthcare provision locally. We have big issues facing us and I could not do this without your help, and I thank all parish councillors but particularly the chair and clerk, information is a two-way flow and I thank you for this, teamwork brings huge benefits, thank you.

5. County Councillor Stuart Swann report – read by the Clerk in Stuarts absence.

Throughout the year, I have liaised regularly with the Chair, Councillors, and Parish Clerk to immediately address any local issues. Also, I have provided updates on local and County Council matters to the Parish Council while attending its meetings on a regular basis. Coton in the Elms Parish Council is to be commended on the way it works proactively and effectively on behalf of residents in the village. The wonderful celebrations in Coton to mark the Coronation of King Charles III, working in conjunction with the Village in Bloom Committee, were a fantastic manifestation of the way the Parish Council actively engages with the community it serves. As with the events in 2022 to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, I was very happy to provide grant funding to support the village events for the Coronation. Among many other local issues, I've also ensured that Parish Councillors have been kept fully informed of numerous matters, including the County Council's approach to repairing potholes and road maintenance, the proposed bypass and new bridge at Walton on Trent, the continued restrictions on the Chetwynd Bridge in Staffordshire, increased night-time traffic on the A444, and the ongoing safety measures I have secured at Drakelow crossroads, all of which have potential impacts upon residents of Coton in the Elms. As we progress into the new Council year, I will continue to offer Coton in the Elms Parish Council, and local residents, all possible support.

6. Other reports from local groups: Read out by Chairman in Lisa's absence.

a. Written by Lisa McIntosh, headteacher at Coton-in-the-Elms C of E Primary School

There have been a number of successes this last year. On 22nd and 23rd June 2022 we had a two-day full OFSTED inspection resulting in a GOOD judgement, with Outstanding for Personal Development. The school is expecting a SIAMS inspection at any time. This is to judge the effectiveness of the school as a Church of England School.

The school is a popular choice for parents and this is reflected in the increasing numbers. In September we will see another 'full' year of pupils (25). Our current number on role is 136.

The school are having a drive on Courageous Advocacy. This is where we are encouraging pupils/ families to consider what they are doing to make a difference to our world. The following initiatives are our current focus:

- Walk to School initiative encouraged. Could we open up the community centre car park for the week beginning 20 th – 24 th May so parents can park and stride if they live outside the village?

- Hedgehog awareness week – pupils are creating enticing hedgehog houses around the school site and in their own gardens.

- No Mow May – we have cancelled our mowing for May and will photograph the grass each week and ask children to look to see if they notice more wildlife.

- Severn Trent have carried out a water survey and will be replacing some of our taps with push taps and updating older units, to help save water. The eco-team shadowed this and played an active part in considering how/where water might be wasted.

The school has a Defibrillator in school. Please do add this to your notification posters in the village. We have stronger links with the church and welcome Antonia (church warden) to the governing board as our foundation governor.

On Wednesday, a select number of pupils enjoy a wellbeing walk around the village during lunchtime. We were pleased to welcome a visit from Heather Wheeler MP and Councillor Stewart Swan last year to officially open the new EYFS play area.

Alex Dale has been invited into school in June to speak to our selection of School Parliament members. He will also officially 'unveil' our art work that we have been creating, which links to our RE curriculum and tells the story of the key aspects of the Bible.

All our Year 5 and 6 pupils passed their Bike-ability award with Year 6 achieving level 2 after showing safe riding schools on the local roads.

We have plans to restore the pond area, so children can enjoy the wildlife. This will be sympathetically restored, with consideration of the wildlife and completed alongside Severn Trent. Any local expertise and support with this are also welcomed.

Parents have reported dog mess outside the school entrance from Glebe Close. This has been reported to the PCSOs. The PCSOs (Andrea and Kieran) were invited into school as mystery readers to read to the children on World Book day.

We finally have a new roof and new windows. This took much longer than anticipated and we thank the local community for their patience whilst these works were undertaken. We have received some fascinating information about the history of the school from a local resident, who is publishing a book about the local history.

Finally, we need an additional classroom, due to increasing pupil numbers. We are seeking support for a grant- and looking for an (affordable) architect to help with drawing up a plan.

- b.** Report from the Community Centre for the Annual Meeting – Read out by the Clerk. This past year has seen 2 new trustees join the committee following the passing of Margaret Parkes. Margaret was an integral part of village life in Coton and an even more important part of the running of the Community Centre. This year has seen the need to change the way we run the bookings and customer facing side of operating the hall as

Margaret took care of everything from the initial enquiry to the collection of hire fees. Getting this right has been extremely important to us and the behind the scenes details are now working well. Generally bookings for this year have been slow. We have had new classes start but unfortunately due to lack of support, have finished within a few months. Private parties have been on a similar level to previous years. Coton Community cafe has had fantastic support over the winter. It is now taking a summer break and will be open again in September. Yoga with Hayley is back at the end of May after time off due to health reasons. Coton Brownies have settled in very well and love the space. This booking has brought new enquiries for private parties from outside the village helping us to take our customer reach a little further outside of Coton WWOOF group will no longer be hosting Friday night bingo. A sad loss for the hall as well as the regular attendees. Maintenance of the building has been minimal this year but the cost of keeping the building open is ever rising with increases across the board. We have a meeting scheduled to discuss new ideas to increase our income as we need to make more money to simply cover our overheads. Although we are in a tough climate and village halls up and down the country are closing, we believe that our lovely village hall is value for money, has what it takes to survive and will weather the storm, as every community needs a meeting place.

Next Annual Parish Meeting 14th May 2025

Meeting concluded @ 6:10pm