

# Badgeworth Parish Council

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Clerk: Mrs. H. Jones | 07840073143 | badgeworthpc@outlook.com

## MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

**Minutes of ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY held on 13<sup>TH</sup> March 2025 at WITCOMBE & BENTHAM Village Hall at 7.00pm.**

### **Present:**

Cllrs. Cottell, Cooper, Howe (Chair), Jones, Marshall, McKay, Norman, Sekhar

Clerk: Mrs. H Jones

Borough & County Councillor Vines

## **Annual Report from Chairman 2024/2025**

### **Background (Chairing and Clerking roles)**

Following the resignation of Councillor Nigel Cottell as Chair of the Council in May 2024, the Council agreed that a sharing of the Chair position be introduced on a rota arrangement.

This report, therefore, reflects the role, actions and work of the Council under the Chairmanship of five of its Councillors during 2024/2025.

The Council's Clerk to the Council (Mrs Helen Jones) retired in 2024 after 8 plus years of dedicated service. Unfortunately, her replacement resigned for personal reasons in July 2024. The Council was very fortunate in being able to reappoint Helen Jones as its Clerk.

### **Planning, Appeals and Enforcement**

The Council has received and provided comments/recommendations to the Borough Council on 34 planning applications in 2024/2025. As most of the Badgeworth area is within the Green Belt, applications tend to be for extensions, modifications and change of use/conversions of existing dwellings.

The Council ensures, as far as possible, that the Green Belt area of Badgeworth is protected in accordance with local and national planning policies/regulations. At the time of writing this report, 3 planning appeals have been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate which includes the proposed development for 50 homes on Green Belt land directly opposite Shurdington Primary School in Badgeworth Lane.

At the beginning of the year, the Parish Council submitted a detailed response (retained on the Council's website) to the proposed Strategic and Local Plan covering Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury. We suspect that work on this plan may need to take into account the Government's proposed changes to the definition of some parts of the Green Belt and a requirement to undertake a further review of the latter. The Government has also issued revised housing targets to planning authorities.

The Council has recently been invited to involve itself in a local survey covering the need for Affordable Housing within the Parish. The results of this survey, conducted by the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, should be available in April 2025. The last survey was undertaken 15 years ago.

The Council has introduced a Biodiversity Policy which is applied when examining planning applications.

### **Finance**

The Council has recently approved its budget of £17563 for 2025/2026. The actual precept i.e. the amount (£15150) to be collected as part of the Council Tax will rise by 2.4%. The difference between these figures will be

met from the Parish Council's Reserves. The healthy level of the Reserves (£16598) is in line with audit guidance or recommendation.

As usual, the Audit Report for 2023/2024 was very satisfactory, leaving some very minor improvements/adjustments to be made during the current year.

The Council is grateful for the Finance Lead work undertaken by Councillor Neil Marshall.

At the time of writing, the Council is in the process of changing its banking arrangements whilst at the same time reviewing its Financial Procedures and Standing Orders.

### **Assets**

In March each year, the Council reviews the purpose and condition of all its assets. As the Council owns Badgeworth Village Hall the condition and use of this building is given particular attention.

The Council has made provision in its 2025/2026 budget for the replacement of defibrillators at Badgeworth Village Hall and Witcombe and Bentham Village Hall. The contributions to be made towards the cost of these replacements by the management committees of both Halls is appreciated.

### **Allotments and Grassed Areas**

We continue to own and let allotments; the maintenance and take up of which remains high. There are however currently 3 vacant plots.

The Council has agreed a new grass cutting contract for 2025/2026 which includes the Village Greens in Badgeworth and Witcombe.

Budget provision has been made for a report and maintenance covering the trees planted on both our Village Greens.

### **Review of Council Policies**

The Council has reviewed its policies covering Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, the Code of Conduct, Grants and Donations etc. It is also about to update and revise the format of its website.

### **Highways and Gloucestershire Airport**

Apart from drawing the attention of County Highways to the condition of some of our roads and verges, the Parish Council was informed of the closure of the railway bridge in Badgeworth Lane and liaised with Highways regarding the consequential effects on residents caused by re-routing traffic via Cold Pool Lane. We still have concerns about the increasing traffic flows along the A46, Badgeworth Lane and Bentham Lane. We will ensure our concerns continue to be brought to the attention of the County Council.

As far as the A417/Missing Link project is concerned, Councillor Jill Jones maintains a close link with the principal contractor/consultants on matters such as speed restrictions, safety and changes to the construction programme. We are kept well-informed through this consultative process.

Councillor Neil Marshall attends meetings of the Consultative Committee of Gloucestershire Airport and, again, we are kept informed, through this arrangement, on such matters as the future development of the airport, commercial development of surrounding land and operational matters. If necessary, we can bring matters of concern to the management of the Airport through these consultative arrangements.

### **Appreciation**

The Council would like to place on record the continued support and commitment given by Helen Jones, its Clerk and Financial Officer. Substantial improvements in our efficiency have been brought about by our Clerk.

Our thanks are given to Councillor Robert Vines (District and County Councillor) who regularly attends our meetings and takes a particular interest in the work and responsibilities of the Parish Council.

## Report of the Responsible Financial Officer 24 - 25

End of year reserves are satisfactory: £18467 (estimate) *Prev yr. £ 19,756.92*

- Note: VAT of approx. £713 to be reclaimed

- **Accounts:**

Income was £15288

Expenditure was £16077 (est.)

- **Budget versus expenditure**

Budgeted expenditure £17030

Actual expenditure £ 16077 (est.)

Meeting closed 7.15pm