

# Gosforth Parish Council

Notes - Annual Parish Meeting of Gosforth Parish Council  
held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at Gosforth Library at 7pm

## PRESENT

Rachel Unsworth (RU) – Chairperson

## Councillors

John Owens (JO)

Jackie Atkinson (JA)

David Gray (DG)

Alex Plent (AP)

Others: Jacqueline Williams (Clerk), and one member of the public.

### 1. Introduction & Welcome

Cllr. Rachel Unsworth welcomed all to the Annual Parish Meeting 2024 and delivered the Chairperson's Report as follows:

### 2. Chairperson's Report 2024

'For people who take time each month to look at our minutes and read the Annual Parish Meeting reports, it may look like we always have the same items on the agenda, and that we still face the same challenges that we did this time last year. And yes, often we do have the same items on the agenda and yes, the challenges with carparking and public toilets remain the same. However, we are actively trying to deal with these issues working alongside other agencies and now know we have 5 years before we can try and get the asset transfer for the car park area, but we can maintain these spaces to a suitable standard. We continue to work with Sellafield Ltd regarding parking within the village and hope going forward we see some positive changes. I would like to thank Tyson for his dedication to drain unblocking, Jackie for her dedication to the green spaces, and David for the time spent researching and planning car park spaces.

I'm very pleased to report that the number of Parish Councilors has increased over the last year, with now only two vacancies available. We have a diverse mix of people, all of which are great assets.

We continue to capitalise on the available funding in the area. The main project delivered by the Parish Council this year, that has been fully funded by available grants, is the installation of the new playpark which will be completed this week. The Parish Council also continues to support the Public Hall Committee and the plans they have for revamping the space bringing it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This year has seen the committee submit further grant applications, some successful and others not, however the project continues to move forward positively. I would like to thank Jackie, Jackie and John for the time spent on this project. We also continue to support the Playing Field Committee and have attended meetings to discuss future plans which we will continue to support going forward.

This report only skims the surface of what the Parish Council has done over the last year. I believe it does show the dedication each councilor has for supporting and improving the village, giving their time as volunteers. I would like to say thank you to you all for your commitment. I would also like to thank our Clerk, Jackie, for her continued excellent efforts in making the Parish Council run efficiently. Looking forwards to the next 12 months, let us engage with the community to help steer us in the direction we need to go. I hope by this time next year we will be well under way with a new updated Parish Plan that we can all use to identify new projects, as well as areas we need to concentrate our efforts, whilst giving us the information from the community for how they see the village progressing. Let's continue to represent the community in a positive, productive manner.'

### **3. Clerk/RFO's Report 2024**

In the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the Parish Council received £221,691 including the precept of £29,581 and several grants totalling £131,981. The grants were for a new playground organised by Cllr. Rachel Unsworth, an Options Appraisal and Surveys on the Public Hall and Library, the remaining balance of a grant for the Outdoor Gym and £2,000 towards the next phase of the Public Hall Refurbishment project. Other income included £16,920 of reclaimed VAT, bank interest, income from the Honesty Box in the Car Park, payments for a memorial bench and other minor amounts from donations and refunds.

The Parish Council makes provision for grants to the playing field and to the public hall & library (a grant partially in kind) and a smaller donation to St Mary's for churchyard maintenance.

Reserves in the bank at the end of the year were £95,124 of this amount £15,094 are general reserves held to ensure the Parish Council has sufficient funds to carry out its obligations and for the maintenance of village amenities such as the playground equipment, war memorial and other assets, as well as for any additional unforeseen expenditure. The remaining reserves are ring-fenced for the new playground project (£54,405), to complete works to the outdoor gym (£2711), funding raised for the next phase of the Public Hall refurbishment project (£2,000) and election costs, legal fees, resurfacing the Car Park, the balance of funds to upgrade the public toilets and other donated funds for specific purposes.

I have prepared the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for 2023-24 and will be seeking the approval of the Parish Council this evening prior to submission to the external auditors. Residents on the electoral role have the right to view and question the annual accounts during a consultation period which will be between Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June and Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July. The accounts and notice of public rights will appear on the notice boards and the website ([gosforthpc.org.uk](http://gosforthpc.org.uk)). Please note the accounts are in draft form until the outcome of the external audit. The external auditors report will be posted to the website and notice boards in due course.

### **4. Public Matters**

No members of the public wished to raise any matters.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm and moved on to the AGM.