

**DRAFT SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**  
**AUST PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF AUST PARISH ASSEMBLY**

Held at Elberton Village Hall on  
Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at 7.30 pm

**Present:**

**Councillor Hawkins, in the chair**  
**Councillors, Ellis, Gwyther, Learmonth, Meredith and Pullin**  
**Ward Councillor Riddle**

**13 Parishioners**

**T E Pyper, Clerk**

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from the Councillor Alway.

**2. Proposed reed bed filtration system at Harnhill Quarry**

Mr Mark King of South Gloucestershire Streetcare explained a proposal to install a treatment facility at Harnhill Quarry to treat gully arisings. At present, South Gloucestershire Council operates three gully cleaners and there are no facilities for emptying them nearer than in Wiltshire. Accordingly, it costs the Council about £60,000 a year to take the vehicles to a site in Wiltshire where they are emptied. It means that each vehicle, and its staff, spends one day a week in transit.

The proposed reed bed facility would cost about £180,000 so there would be a three year pay back. The clean water arising from the treatment would be reused in the vehicles and any surplus run off into the drainage system. The solid waste would be mixed with straw, composted and turned into low grade topsoil for use by the highways department.

There would be 3 movements of gully cleaning vehicles into and out of the site each week, and, if Bristol agrees to use the facility also, then an additional 3 vehicles each way. The site would be permanently manned.

It was hoped that planning permission and approval from the Environment Agency would be granted this summer, in which case the facility would be constructed this year and treatment should start early in 2012.

In response to questions, Mr King said that all vehicles would approach and leave via the Aust Road – they would not go through Olveston. The waste would contain some organic compounds (oil and rubber) and some heavy metals. This is what the treatment would remove. There would be no structures on the site apart from low walls. The settlement and storage ponds would not be deep. There would be noise from the vehicles coming

and going, and from a tractor working on site to turn the composting materials. He did not believe that the facility would affect the planned public access to footpaths on the landfill site if and when these were introduced.

It was generally agreed that this was a good scheme and the chairman thanked Mr King for his presentation.

### **3. Proposed Nuclear Power Station at Oldbury**

Messrs Tim Proudler and James Eaton of Horizon Power gave a presentation on the proposals.

Horizon was a joint venture between RWE Eon and nPower. Between them, the two groups operate 23 nuclear power stations in Germany and Sweden. They are planning to create 6,000MW of generating capacity at a cost of about £15billion in the UK before 2025 at Wyllfa on Anglesey and Oldbury. Wyllfa was the lead site, but Oldbury would catch up and also be on stream, they hoped, by 2025.

Mr Proudler outlined the country's generating needs over the next 15 years. About 60,000MW of new capacity would be needed by 2025 of which the Government wanted 35,000MW to be renewables and 25,000MW thermal including gas and coal fired stations and nuclear.

He noted that the Government had commissioned its chief Nuclear Officer to write a report on the Fukushima disaster and its implications for the UK's plans.

Public consultation on the design and licensing would start in about 2 years time. The site at Oldbury was still being evaluated for environmental (including ecological) issues, flooding and transport, as well as other matters. For flooding, it was likely that there would be a general strengthening of the sea defences for the surrounding area and also the station itself would be raised. It would be a design requirement that it should be able to withstand a one in 10,000 year event as well as the anticipated rise in sea level through climate change.

In relation to transport, Mr Proudler said that he hoped that most of the large materials would be brought on site by water – some of the components were very large and it would be very difficult to bring them overland. However, the estuary was a RAMSAR site and environmental issues had to be considered. On cooling, Mr Proudler said that Horizon's preferred option would be 70 metre forced draft cooling towers. Some countries now prefer the use of cooling towers to water cooling because towers have a greater facility to disperse heat generally.

The site had not yet been confirmed by the government. It was a good site for demographic reasons, is free from aviation and MOD activity. Other factors in the evaluation would include flood risk, ecology and cooling. The local community is used to having nuclear facilities in the area.

The Chairman thanked Messrs Proudler and Eaton for their presentation.

### **4. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman, Councillor Hawkins, gave his report to the meeting as follows:

2010/11 has been noteworthy as a year of change. We have a new clerk, and have lost a valued councillor: Tom Fothergill, our clerk for over 20 years finally retired, and was

replaced by Tim Pyper; I'm sure that you will be pleased to know that Tom is now well, having not only survived hospitalisation for a bleeding ulcer – fixed rapidly – but fixed much less rapidly, was the hospital infection that ensued. Gina has gone south, following Peter, and has been replaced by Andrew Learmonth. I'm sure that Gina and Peter will be missed by Aust – both being deeply involved in many aspects of village life. We, on the other hand, have got Andrew, who was particularly helpful during the Greenacres issue. Our thanks are also due to Ann Wiseman who was prepared to fill the vacant "Gina" slot.

Much of the year's business has concerned planning, with several familiar names recurring. Greenacres, where progress towards the return to agriculture needs watching, Whale Wharf which rumbles on demanding continuous attention, not least in next Thursday's planning committee, and a number of others, generally straightforward, but with the notable exceptions of "the wall" and Quarry Cottage, both in Littleton, and which do, or will, require Council attention.

In the Greenacres context it is appropriate to recognise Bristol and Avon's agreement to run their roadsweeper through the village occasionally. It is appreciated. However in the longer term the use of Greenacres continues to be of concern. Suggestions for the longer term noted include use for allotments or car parking for public transport connection.

The Woodwell Meadow Local Nature Reserve is established, with the first major use by Olveston School planned for June. Those of you here tonight might want to collect a copy of the Woodwell Meadows nature journal, produced primarily for children's use, but more than good enough for the rest of us.

Aust flooding remains an issue. However, our appeal under the Sustainable Communities Act was approved, and we continue, in conjunction with South Gloucestershire, the Environment Agency and the Lower Severn Drainage Board, to pursue our original request – which was that a proper engineering investigation be carried out to determine the cause, and then to do the necessary work to resolve the problem. We must note that South Gloucestershire Council have increased the size of the culverts allowing water from Fosse Rhine into the Pill, and have increased the size of some road drains in the village, while the Drainage Board have both increased the size of a culvert in the Rhine, and have cleared the watercourse. They also intend to complete more culvert enlargement. It is possible that the works completed will suffice. However, time will tell.

The Council continues to observe, and, where appropriate, to be involved with local infrastructure issues. These include both the items presented to you tonight, as well as longer term National Grid changes concerned with the connection between Hinckley Point and Seabank power stations, and eventually, connection to the new Oldbury station, which will be presented to us in due course. On a minor level we have recently widened the Aust/Olveston Road layby – easier, and I suspect, cheaper than waiting for SGC.

## **5. Report by the Ward Councillor, Matthew Riddle**

Councillor Riddle thanked the Parish Council for its invitation to this and its regular meetings. He valued the work of the council and noted that many issues arose for the first time through parish council concerns.

Councillor Riddle was very pleased to report that Council Tax would not rise this year. He noted that over the past 4 years, South Gloucestershire Council tax had risen by 11% which he thought showed good control. South Gloucestershire's budget was £500M pa. 25% of this comes from central government and that part is being cut by 30% over the next four years. The Council was spending more on schools and an extra £2.7m on services for the elderly. He noted that the number of residents of South Gloucestershire aged 85 or over was expected to double over the

next 20 years. In Bristol, by contrast, the population was expected to get younger. South Gloucestershire already provides over 8000 hours of care per week to its elderly residents.

The Council's control on spending had started with a review in 2008 and as a result there had been a reduction of 350 full time posts out of a total work force of 7000. This had largely been achieved through retirements and not replacing leavers.

Recycling, Councillor Riddle said, is a Good Thing. With the planned increases in landfill tax from £40 per tonne to £80 per tonne, it was vital to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. Several developments had taken place including the separation of cardboard from green waste (so that it could be sold for reuse) and from May, the contents of black bins would be sorted in Avonmouth to remove low grade plastics, metals etc for reuse. All this had been achieved through the SITA contract at no extra cost to the Council.

On planning, Councillor Riddle said that the Government had abolished the Regional Spatial Strategy which had proposed 30,000 new homes in South Gloucestershire in the period to 2026. The Council had approved its Core Strategy with a target of 21,000 new homes, largely to be achieved on large sites, including the Bristol Ring Road and at Cribbs Causeway. There was unlikely to be any significant effect in our three villages, although as Aust had a defined settlement boundary, there would be a review and it might be extended. The other two villages are in the green belt and additional housing was unlikely to come there except through barn conversions and the like.

Councillor Riddle said that he was proud to represent the parish on the South Gloucestershire Council, as he had done now for 8 years. He would be standing for re-election on 5<sup>th</sup> May.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Riddle for his report and invited questions and comments.

## **6. Open Forum**

The Chairman invited contributions from the meeting. Councillor Ellis asked if Councillor Riddle could say how much was saved by the cutting of the 350 posts. Councillor Riddle said that he did not have the figure. But he was pleased to note, for example, that South Gloucestershire was closing no libraries. It was possible that the Council would look at ways to incentivise residents to recycle more.

The Chairman complemented South Gloucestershire on the service provided at the Sort It facility – the staff was very obliging. While agreeing with that, Mr Whitfield said that they were bound by some curious rules: For example there was a restriction on the number of tyres that you could dispose of although the used tyres were sold for recycling. And you could take five 1 gallon cans of engine oil, but you could not take one 5 gallon drum of engine oil.

## **7. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010 were taken as read and approved. The Chairman signed them as a correct record.

## **8. Conclusion**

The Chairman thanked all those who had come, and closed the meeting at 9.20 pm.