

Norton Lindsey Parish Council Annual Open Meeting held in the Village Hall at 8.00pm on 4 April 2017

Present: Cllr J Stobart (Chairman); Cllr Miss A Birch; Cllr R Mann; Cllr M Neale; Cllr K Sparkes; Cllr Mrs A Mace-Leska; WCC Cllr L Caborn; Mrs J Bendall (Clerk); and 25 members of the public

Apologies: WDC Cllr P Phillips

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made by the Councillors and Clerk.

2. Minutes of the Open Meeting held on 12 April 2016

The Minutes of the Open Meeting held on 12 April 2016 were discussed, confirmed and signed.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave a review of the past year, as follows:

We have dealt with a variety of issues over the last year, which can be categorised under three main headings:

- The action plan (which includes the website, traffic problems, and aiming to decrease the incidence of dog fouling in the parish). This will be discussed under item 6.
- Planning
- Highways

There have been a range of planning applications over the last year, none particularly exceptional except for one. Mainly they have been modifications to private houses plus the redevelopment of the Village Hall, and the proposed development at the old Poultry Farm site.

When the Parish Council considers applications it takes into consideration official planning guidelines to allow people to develop their homes whilst maintaining the feel of the village and being mindful of the neighbours of properties.

The notable planning application was for nine proposed houses on the Poultry Farm site, and the Parish Council held an Extraordinary Meeting to ascertain the views of both the parishioners and well as the residents of the wider village. As a result of this meeting, we expressed an objection to the development.

It is also worth noting that there have been enquiries from developers about a piece of land off Curliu Lane. We are minded to resist these developments, especially as WDC has Norton Lindsey earmarked for infill only, and we will of course engage the parish if the enquiries turn into something more.

At the March meeting of the Parish Council representatives from WDC Planning Department met with us to give us a better idea of how they think and how they implement planning guidelines, particularly as the village is split into two districts and there are disparities between the two. It was a difficult conversation as they could only discuss the Warwick District side, but a very useful meeting nonetheless.

The Parish Council has recently commissioned a Housing Needs Survey which will be very useful in the future to allow us to respond in a robust way to applications such as the Poultry Farm site, as it will give us a clear view of local residents needs and requirements. The results of the survey are due back shortly.

The third issue which we discuss at every meeting is the condition of the roads and footpaths within the parish. Highways is a standard item on the agenda, and we are happy to receive complaints regarding state

of roads. Recently ditch clearance has taken place on Snitterfield Road and hedge trimming throughout the parish, plus ongoing problems with the state of Wolverton Road have been reported along with flooding in Lower Norton. In the last month we have had a village walk around with County Highways to highlight some of our concerns, including in addition to those mentioned, water running onto Canada Lane, possible signs warning of pedestrians between Arles Cottage and Blacon Farm, and the repair of a pot hole and installation of verge where there wasn't one on Church Road. We hope to make continued progress on some of these issues throughout the coming year.

Finally, we should mention the New Inn and the successful outcome of the Parish Council registering the pub as an asset of community value back in 2013. Thanks to the Salvation Squad for their hard work in raising the funds for the community to purchase the pub, and to WDC Cllr Rhead for his help in securing a grant.

5. Treasurer's Report

Following the investment in the previous financial year of £30,000 of the Capital Fund in a 1 year fixed rate account with an interest rate of 1.80%, the account matured with £571.36 interest earned. The balance of this fixed rate account (£30,571.36) has been transferred to the ongoing 90-day account in which we invested £16,000 of the Capital Fund at the same time as the initial £30,000 deposit. The interest rate of the 90-day account was originally 1.740%, but last year this dropped to 1.49%, which is still better than the general savings accounts we hold with the bank.

As always, we are looking for alternative bonds with better interest rates into which we can transfer money from our Capital Fund. However, as reported in previous years it is very difficult to find a suitable account that will allow us to invest "public money".

For your information, the Capital Fund is made up of £48,394.72, which is the "depot" money, and £3,500 which is retained for contested elections.

The Precept was increased to £6,500 for 2016-2017, and the sum we received for Concurrent Services and the Council Tax Grant was £621, a £78 drop from last year. It is worth noting that the Concurrent Services and Council Tax Grant that we receive is being phased out completely by Warwick District Council over the next two years.

Other income that we received was £238.08 interest on the 90-day account, and a paltry £2.18 interest on our bank savings accounts.

There was a slight increase of just over £12 for our insurance costs for the year, and our subscription to the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils was £1 more than the previous year.

Staffing costs increased as there was a nationally agreed Local Government Services pay rise, but administration costs dropped by more than half, due in main to the purchase of a laptop, printer, software and accessories, and relevant training for the newly elected councillors in the previous year.

The Parish Council once again made a donation towards maintenance of the Church Clock / Chimes, the defibrillator, Millennium Green and the Churchyard, and supported our local village clubs, details of which are on the bottom of the Accounts.

6. Action Plan Update

There were three items carried over from previous year – the website, speeding/traffic management and dog fouling – and there has been variable progress this year.

- Website – we have a website and so have met statutory obligations, but we are looking to make it more attractive, user-friendly and useful, in part by linking with different organisations, and to ensure it is

more robust and secure. If you have any feedback on the website, or if there are things you'd like to see on it, please let us know.

- Speeding traffic management – we are still awaiting a date for volunteer training to enable us to start our Community Speedwatch Programme. Unfortunately it is dragging on due to a varying number of volunteers, and the trainers turning up at the wrong place, etc, but we are hopeful the issues will be resolved shortly, and that the programme will be up and running within next couple of months. More positively, thanks to WCC Cllr Caborn and WCC, you will see that a range of traffic calming measures have been installed, including dragons teeth and a gate on Wards Hill, and new improved signs on Snitterfield Lane and Curlieu Lane. We are mindful that there are other areas not covered by improvements, and are very aware of the problem with fast moving, dangerous traffic on Curlieu Lane and Norton Curlieu Lane, and we are actively seeking to try to resolve these issues. Hopefully we will be able to report more progress at the next annual meeting.
- Dog fouling – the problem we have has extended from the incidents of dog fouling to the dog bins themselves. After several years of all four bins being emptied, WDC decided they would only empty two of the bins. The two bins that aren't being emptied have been taped up to prevent use as they won't be emptied. It has proved hard to get anyone to take responsibility, despite help from WDC Cllr Phillips. We have a meeting arranged later this month with someone from WDC who is responsible, so hopefully we can move this forward. Dog fouling itself is an ongoing issue.

7. Report from WCC Cllr L Caborn

Cllr Les Caborn's combined report for Bishops Tachbrook division was as follows:

Budget

We have faced up to the challenges of reducing budgets by ensuring the County Council is as efficient as can be. We have reduced directors from 10 to 4, and heads of service from 58 to 16, whilst reviewing every post. We share work with, and work for, other authorities.

Council tax has been set at 1.99%, with +2% ring fenced for social care for 2017-18.

We have straightforward objectives: building Warwickshire's economy by supporting and attracting business to grow jobs and investing in skills and education, and looking after those who are vulnerable, by supporting people to be as independent as they can be for as long as possible.

Children's and Adult care and safeguarding

- We have opened MASH, the multi-agency safeguarding hub which pulls together police, health, social care and all partners to safeguard and protect all by operating together.
- We are recruiting 40 additional children's social workers to reduce caseloads.
- We have formed the Children's Transformation Board to give seamless support to children and families from 0 to 18.
- We have built extra care housing for supported living for the vulnerable.
- We have transformed domiciliary care to give more contact time.
- We have formed a joint reablement service with SWFT.
- We have received £20 million over 3yrs from government extra funding for older people.

Education

- We have invested an extra £1m in home to school routes.
- 89% of schools are judged good or outstanding by OFSTED.
- Pupil performance in most areas is better than the national average.
- More SEN pupils educated at local schools.
- The school estate is being expanded.

Infrastructure

- We have an investment fund for infrastructure and town centre regeneration.
- Additional parkway stations have been created at Ricoh, Nuneaton, Stratford and Kenilworth.
- M40 Junction 12 has seen improvements at Gaydon.
- Stanks Island and Stoneleigh junctions of the A46 will be improved.
- Gritting routes have been maintained and pothole repairs undertaken.
- The WCC apprentice hub is rated in the top 100 in the UK.

Road Safety

I have used my Councillor road safety budget for works in Budbrooke, Norton Lindsey, Bishops Tachbrook and Barford. This will continue for 2017-18.

Health

- We have launched our zero tolerance to suicide strategy.
- We have redesigned and retendered our children's mental health services.
- We have instigated a White Board - our 24/7 mental health help service for over 16s.
- Living Well with Dementia has achieved over 13,000 dementia friends.
- We have redesigned our school health and wellbeing service.
- We are responsible for drugs, alcohol and smoking quitting and support.

Combined Authority

We are still an associate member working with, but not part of, the Combined Authority.

Sustainability and Transformation Plan

The STP is designed to get all partners in the health system working together, and to reduce escalating costs to make health and social care affordable longer term. So far in Warwickshire we have had a difficult start but progress is being made somewhat slowly. WCC is a vital partner in this along with our boroughs and districts.

Cllr Les Caborn

Division member, portfolio holder for health and children's services.

8. Report from WDC Cllr P Phillips

WDC Cllr Phillips was unable to attend the meeting, but sent the following report:

I want to report back on three major initiatives within Warwick District over the last year.

The first one is to get the Local Plan through the Examination In Public. With the Inspector having previously indicated he would reject the original proposal as being "unsound", WDC made amendments to the original plan, largely to meet the "unmet need" of Coventry. In total, more than 4,000 houses were added to the Plan. The Plan went through its Examination In Public in Autumn 2016 and the Inspector has now advised the Council of some suggested amendments – mostly of deletions of sites within the Green Belt. Currently these amendments are out for public consultation until the 5th May and all residents are welcome to put their comment in. Full Council will probably be asked to approve the revised Local Plan in mid-Summer 2017.

The second major initiative is the investment of £15 million in upgrading the St Nicholas Park and Newbold Comyn Leisure Centres. Both Centres were getting towards the end of their useful life and this new investment will provide modern leisure centres meeting the needs of the communities for the next 30+ years. They will also be managed by a company called "Everyone Active", who have successfully tendered to run the centres for the next 10 years, and who will be very attuned to meeting the needs of the community to remain healthy and fit. Facilities in Kenilworth will be for review later, probably in 2018.

Thirdly, there has been considerable issues around unauthorised encampments by travellers. Extensive camps over Christmas and the New Year, and since then, have left to considerable public disquiet about the mess left behind. We have been working with the Police & Crime Commissioner, Philip Seccombe, to develop a Countywide approach as to how to handle these sites, but in the meantime as a District Council we have agreed to invest £180,000 into hardening our public spaces to make these areas less prone to these encampments.

Key areas for the year ahead include:

- Conclusion of the Local Plan as outlined above.
- The development of a new car park strategy for Warwick and Leamington as Linen Street and Covent Garden Multi-Storey Car Parks reach the end of their useful life.
- A new and smaller set of council offices will be built alongside the Covent Garden car park, enabling the current Riverside House (WDC's HQ) to be replaced by additional housing.
- Proposals for a new football stadium for Leamington Football Club along with community facilities on the Europa Way/Gallows Hill site.

As always, myself and Alan Rhead are happy to take calls or emails throughout the year, and to meet residents at Parish Council meetings, to discuss any issues or questions that they may have.

9. Any Other Matters / Open Discussion

Q. With the traffic calming, is what has been done already the extent of what will be done?

A. We are looking at Curlieu Lane and Norton Curlieu Lane to see what else can be done as we are very mindful of the concerns of residents regarding the volume and speed of traffic.

Q. There are concerns with the level of aircraft noise over the village as there appears there are a lot more planes.

A. The area over Norton Lindsey is part of the "holding area" for Birmingham airport, and the issue has been made worse by increased air traffic due to the extension to Birmingham's runway.

Q. Residents of Hawkes Hill Close have concerns regarding the recent planning application at 8 Hawkes Hill Close, as the proposal substantially increases the size of property, and they feel it is detrimental to the nature of the Close. Several residents have objected to the planning application. Can the Parish Council support the objections?

A. The Clerk to contact the planning officer and WDC Cllr Phillips to try to arrange a site visit.

Q. Following their recent contact with the Parish Council to raise their concerns about Norton Curlieu Lane, the residents of Lower Norton are now feeling more part of the parish, and would like to thank both the Parish Councillors and WCC Cllr Caborn who have taken the time to walk the lane to see for themselves the state of carriageway, the issue with flooding, and the dangerously deep ditches, and to take on board the concerns with the number of accidents on the Lane that has a speed limit of 60mph, several blind bends and is used frequently as a rat run. It was noted that residents had dismissed the recent suggestion to make Norton Curlieu Lane one way, because they believe it will make it a faster road as two-way traffic slows vehicles down. Residents will come up with more ideas which they will be putting to both the Parish and County Council. Discussion took place regarding a recent accident, and the residents were asked if the Police were involved? A resident who went to help didn't see any police. The Locality Officer with County Highways will be visiting with an engineer within the week, and Cllr Mrs Mace-Leska and possibly WCC Cllr Caborn would like to attend. It was agreed that traffic calming on this Lane is essential.

A. N/A

Q. What are the details of the suggested development on Curlieu Lane?

A. There is nothing definite, just developers sniffing around.

- Q. What is happening with superfast broadband in the parish?
- A. This is a County Council matter, not parish Council, but it is believed the majority of the village now has access to superfast broadband. At least 95% of the County is on superfast broadband, and progress is on track.
- Q. Are bonfires an issue in the parish?
- A. The Parish Council does not have any rules about bonfires, and the parish is not a smokeless zone.
- Q. Concerns were raised that residents in the Stratford District side of the village are not contributing towards the parish precept.
- A. It was noted that Norton Lindsey Parish Council does not make any expenditure in the Stratford District side of the village, and that actually Wolverton Parish Council contributes towards the maintenance of the playground. Norton Lindsey is an awkward situation with two districts and three parishes, but the Boundary Commission had vetoed any boundary changes to bring the entire village together in one parish and one district.
- Q. A question was asked regarding LED lighting within the parish.
- A. WCC Cllr Caborn confirmed the County position on LED lighting but advised that this did not include rural footway lighting, which covers Norton Lindsey. It was noted that LED lighting systems are flexible and cheaper to run, but it would not be cost effective to convert the lighting in Norton Lindsey.
- Q. WCC Cllr Caborn was asked a question about when the business rates would be known.
- A. He advised that the new business rates had not yet been published, but that any impact was likely to be neutral.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Meeting closed at 21.14 hrs.