

Minutes of the Woodnewton Annual Village Meeting

Woodnewton Village Hall on Orchard Lane

Tuesday 2nd June 2015

Present- Chair Cllr A Hansford, Vice chair Cllr Liz Holland, Cllr Tom Holmes, Cllr Roger Flack, Cllr Russ Jenner, David Webb, Clerk Fi Thompson and 14 residents.

Guests –Heather Smith (Deputy Leader of Northamptonshire County Council), Paul Mitchinson (Police PCSO)

1. Apologies-Valerie Raven Hill- District Councillor
2. Cllr Andrew Hansford introduced the councillors and the guests then welcomed everyone to the meeting.
3. Paul Mitchinson- PCSO Paul spoke of the trial of a future's programme in Oundle. There are 11 PCSOs and 2 PCs and a Sergeant. The fire brigade and police would be together in a fast responder car and a PCSO would now be on horse back. The police are encouraging communities to police themselves using 'Business Watch', 'Pub Watch', 'Farm Watch', 'Speed Watch' and 'Street Watch'. Oundle station covers county borders sharing intelligence.

Cllr Hansford thanked Paul and opened floor to questions.

Q. Is Oundle Police Station manned at night?

A. Until midnight and occasionally until 3am.

4. Heather Smith- Aviva Women's Cycling Tour

Last May, we hosted the start and first two stages of the 5 day stage of the UK Women's Cycling Tour through Northamptonshire. The cream of the international and Olympic cycling world participated with 300,000 spectators over the five days and a total of over a million television viewers which equalled the viewing figures of the British leg of the Tour de France. The event was an incredible success for Northamptonshire, both economically and for the prestige of the County. I am delighted to report that we have successfully negotiated the 3rd stage of the 2015 tour back to Northamptonshire on 19th June starting in Oundle at 10am and finishing in

Kettering at approx 13.30. The race will pass through North East Northamptonshire and will come from Fotheringhay to Nassington then head to Woodnewton. It is scheduled to arrive in Woodnewton at 10.40am turning into Orchard Lane heading towards Apethorpe. The roads will be closed for 20 minutes as the 100 riders along with the National Police Motor Cycle escort team and all the race cars come through. ITV 4 (ITV Sport) will be broadcasting 1 hours coverage at 8pm during the evening on each of the 5 days). Your help to keep the Orchard Lane as clear of parked vehicles as possible would be appreciated and assistance with the side road junctions stopping cars coming out would also help. If individuals could wear a yellow vest and stand at the junction it will mean the Police escort can concentrate on stopping through traffic at the main road junctions.

Educational Excellence: Race to the Top

February 2015 saw the launch our “Race to the Top” strategy to raise educational attainment in our schools. We are aiming to make Northamptonshire one of the highest performing counties for education by 2020 by encouraging schools to strive for excellence.

Locally we are moving ahead with the change from 3 tier education system to 2 tier. That is Primary and Secondary schools. The change starts in September and building work will be taking place in the schools that need extensions/alterations. Currently education achievements in this part of the County are so low that we are in the bottom 30% in the country so although change is difficult for everyone we need to tackle the long term poor performance and improve the teaching environment to attract quality teachers. The middle school in Oundle will close from July and Oundle Primary School will gradually move to the site. Nassington school extension now has planning permission and that work will start in the autumn. The mobile classroom currently in the school yard will then be removed from site to give additional space back for the children.

Our Infrastructure Programme

The County Council is in the middle of the largest infrastructural investment programme in its 125 year history. In the last five years we have spent over half a billion pounds. During the next five years we will be investing a further £600 million upgrading and building new schools and roads. Last year saw the opening of the

£35million Corby Link Road and workings on upgrading key strategic junction pinch points within the County has started.

I will continue to fight for local investment in highway maintenance but I am sure you will appreciate the pressure we are under to reduce expenditure.

The Council Budget

The pressures on Strategic Local Authority services are immense. We have already taken out over £200 million from our base budget and we have another £148 million left to take our over the next five years. Quite simply, we cannot go on as we are. Our current operating model is not fit for purpose. Over the next five years the costs of providing services due to a continued surge in demand and other pressures will rise by £104m while the money given to us by government will reduce by £79m. This means the cost of running services will be double the amount of money available to us. There will be difficult times ahead.

Children's services

We continue to have huge pressures finding homes for over 930 children that we have had to bring into our care. There is a shortage of Foster carers in the County so many children are having to be placed outside the County and in the past 12 months there has been an increase of 20% in numbers of children needing protection and coming into care.. Safeguarding children is a Council priority. **Cllr Hansford thanked Heather and opened floor to questions.**

Q. Can more pot holes be filled before Aviva Women's Tour?

A. Yes, the evening before repairs will be carried out.

Q. Street Doctor have given a careless and erroneous answer to a question about the condition of the bottom 13 feet of St Mary's Hill, an un adopted street in Woodnewton.

A. Invite Sarah Barnwell to a Parish Council meeting.

Q. A section of un adopted road needs resurfacing at cost of £3,000, could NCC help financially?

A. Heather may be able to find help in her empowering fund. Normally solicitors make responsibility clear for house purchasers. It is very unlikely to be adopted as has to be highways standard.

Q. BT Superfast Broadband not live yet.

A. Heather will investigate.

Q. Disappointing school results in area, what can NCC do?

A. £9,000,000 being invested in new 2 tier system, sites and buildings. Schools have been neglected in this area. Parents are voting with their feet and moving students to other schools.

Q. What will Oundle Primary become?

A. It belongs to Diocese. New Primary will belong to Diocese and old site money will come in to the 'pot'.

Q. How big will Oundle Primary School become?

A. It is now No. 2 form entry and nearly at capacity, will become No. 3 form entry. Nassington and Glapthorn primaries will remain open.

Q. Will land at new Oundle Primary be sold off?

A. Site is big enough for secondary school and only requires primary school land. There is enough for No.4 form entry and retaining sports facilities. May stay in NCC control.

Q. Will there still be a traffic problem after September in Oundle at school times?

A. Less of a problem as fewer students will be bussed around. Training needed for parents and students to walk and cycle to school. A cycle way is planned between Glapthorn and Oundle.

Cllr Hansford thanked Heather and Paul

5.- David Webb Chair of Woodnewton Parish Council until May

2015 -Last year was my 8th and final year as Chairman. During the year Abbie Smith resigned and on behalf of Council, our thanks for all that she has done – not least her work in obtaining the grant funding for the new playground equipment. In addition Liz Holland resigned after 7 years as Parish Clerk. Once again ,on behalf of Council ,our thanks to Liz as Clerk and also for mentoring our new Parish Clerk Fi Thompson, who was appointed in September.

So now for a quick summary of what Council has done in 2014. We had a quiet start to the council year. Then in September we amended the regulations concerning the material for headstones in the cemetery, allowing in future all natural stone polished or un-polished.

In addition the track by the side of the village hall was repaired and improved, and a gate installed to restrict access to authorised persons only. A new bench was installed in the toddler area ,by the village hall committee.

In November after a great deal of communication and badgering, the footpaths were finally re-instated following the electrical undergrounding works. However the excess gravel in places. Remains an issue.

In January low wattage white lamps were installed in the remaining lights in Main Street creating uniformity whilst also reducing costs.

In February we had a presentation from BT regarding superfast broadband in the village, and all of you will no doubt have had a visit from a Gigaclear representative trying to get you to sign up for their version. This is no doubt going to be an issue later in the year when they finally get round to starting the work – including the possibility of digging up the footpaths - again!!

In March we appointed not one but two new grass contractors with an enhanced remit following comments from villagers. H J Horticulture will be responsible for mowing verges, the playing field and the cemetery. Additional to the previous contract they will be required to do 2 extra cuts per year, plus mowing the allotment path, cutting hedges in the cemetery twice a year and spraying weeds in the cemetery twice a year. Richard Brown will be responsible for mowing the churchyard, including collecting the grass cuttings.

In April two additional standpipes were installed on the allotments providing water for those with allotments at the top end. In addition bollards were put in by the front of the village hall and the bottom access to the playing field from Ashby's Drive was blocked off. This work was done from a health & safety aspect.

The Diamond Jubilee money was finally spent with 7 new trees being planted on the playing field which will be a long lasting memorial for the village.

In addition to all this work we have considered 9 planning applications, and had two very successful village clean up days. Our thanks to Andrew Hansford for organising them.

As I said at the beginning, this is my last report as Chairman. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have served with me as Councillors over the last eight years, for their hard work and commitment. At times it seems it is a very thankless task, and we only hear from villagers when they want to complain about something. And we don't get paid either!! But seriously we do it because we love our

village, and because we take pride in it, and because we want to make it a better place to live. Hopefully you might feel that during my time as Chairman we have gone some way to achieve that.

David Webb

6.- Fi Thompson –Clerk’s report

Administration costs were slightly higher this year as this new Clerk learns the job and attends appropriate NCALC training.

In 2014-2015 the council spent £1170 on replacing street lanterns and installing Part Night Cells, which will ultimately pay for themselves in the reduction of electricity used. EON remain competitive in their prices but have raised their prices from £8 to £12 per kWh

Council installed a new hard core track to the allotments, two new stand pipes and a five bar gate in an attempt to prevent fly tipping.

The mowing contractor had become too ill to complete his term and as residents requested that clippings were removed from the churchyard and cemetery and that the playing field and verges were cut more frequently, new contractors have been given the mowing contract, HJ Horticulture and Richard Brown and the cost of the mowing contract is a total of £5175 net of VAT, NCC contribute £480.

The loan for the cemetery has one more payment of £563 payable in June 2015.

The council continues to support the Woodnewton Newsletter and Woodnewton Website giving £150 pa.

The money collected at the Diamond Jubilee village picnic has been spent on seven specimen trees; a mulberry, a tulip, a Turkish hazel, a black walnut, a hornbeam and two oak trees @ £790. These trees have been professionally planted in an unused allotment site north of the bonfire site as agreed and the land has been levelled and seeded.

Allotment fees remain at £12 per plot and will be collected in September 2015. There is one spare plot at the moment and no waiting list.

The precept is now £11,800 pa

The reserves are £7779 higher this year to cover costs for playground replacement, churchyard wall repairs and road repairs. Reserve is £14,000.

Cllr Hansford thanked the ex Chair and Clerk and opened floor to questions.

Q. Congratulations to Woodnewton Parish Council for their work. Can we place a 'dog poo' bin in St Mary's Close as there is a pile of full bags of poo at end of the rear passage.

A. Will look at prices.

Q. Where will the new bonfire site be?

A. On 6th July at 8.00 there will be a consultation with all interested allotment holders and residents passing comments to Cllr Roger Flack or Clerk Fi Thompson prior to the meeting.

Q. Can access to field via 5 bar gate be assured at all times?

A. Permanent sign will go on gate (AH) and Abbie will include this proviso in the hiring conditions of WWH.

Q. Blocked drain opposite No 25 Main St

A. Clerk has reported it to Street Doctor.

Q. Loose chippings in Main Street are a problem

A. This is Western Power's responsibility.

Q. The 'Sycamore verge' is hacked and the children's playground grass is not collected.

A. Collecting cuttings in playground is not in the contract, Clerk to write to HJ Horticulture about improving verge cutting generally.

Q. Mrs M Jenner thanked Richard Brown , mower for churchyard , for the improved appearance.

Cllr Hansford stated that there were No. 2 casual vacancies on the Parish Council. It was also made clear that as Chair of Woodnewton Parish Council Cllr Hansford would be breaking with tradition by not appearing as the DAME in the annual pantomime.

Many thanks to all attending

Meeting closed at 9.15

Cake provided by Eve cakes of Main Street, Woodnewton.