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Annual Parish Meeting MINUTES

Due to restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak, the meeting took place using Zoom video conferencing.

20th May 2021

Item 1: Welcome address and introductions by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Jill Slinn

Chairman welcomed members of the public.

Item 2: Approval of the minutes of the 2019 Annual Parish Council Meeting (circulated separately)

The minutes of the 2019 meeting were approved and signed by Jill Slinn, Chairman of the Parish Council.

Item 3: Annual report from the Chairman of Church with Chapel Brampton Parish Council

Times have been strange for the parish council as they have for the rest of the community due to the covid pandemic. We as a parish council have managed to hold the statutory meetings and various other planning meetings during the year via Zoom.

Traffic problems in both villages have continued to be a problem for us but we have found the mobile speed cameras a help and be assured if we have spare money or receive any funding, we will use it wisely in this area. The sponsored PCSO is working closely with us to resolve/assist with issues that are raised in the villages.

We no longer contribute to the bus service through the village as it became cost prohibitive. We welcome any feedback from parishioners.

We have so far had little dealings with the new West Northants Council, and it will be interesting to see how this works. We hope that parishioners have seen the changes at the playing field with the new play equipment and the new seats as well as parish council notice boards, all going towards making the village a better place. Several of the parish councillors worked particularly hard towards the seats and play equipment and I would like to thank Richard Gent and Robin Green. Also, special thanks go to Sarah Stock our clerk who worked hard to obtain a grant to help us with the costs

Item 4: Presentation of the accounts (report from Sarah Stock, Clerk/RFO)

Council started the year with an overly healthy bank balance of £45K (councils are advised to hold one year's precept) and were tasked by the auditors to allocate or use these funds. We closed the year with £28K remaining. Broadly, the council spent on the following:

£ 6,610 PCSO Contribution
£ 1,790 Tree works
£5,951 Hedge laying
£22,916 Buy & install new play equipment
£2,210 Contribution to rural bus service
£960 installation of defibrillator

£17,149 Scheduled running costs

Council has completed the annual audit for YE March 2021 with no matters arising.

Item 5: Reports from County and District Councillors (Dist Cllrs John Shephard/Sarah Peck and CCllr Judy Shephard)

District Councillors' Report from Councillors Sarah Peck and John Shephard

With both a heavy heart and optimistic anticipation for the future we write the final district councillors' report to parish councils.

This year will be remembered for introducing Zoom council, committee and officer meetings, councils being used to channel unprecedented support to local businesses, officers' home working and officers' and members' support for the most vulnerable and of course the demise of Daventry District Council at midnight on the evening of Monday 31st March. At that time your district councillors lose that role and become members of the West Northamptonshire Council. We hold that title until the elections on 6 May.

What is the legacy of DDC? We would like to think that the local plans it has introduced over the years have been welcomed by parishes. Of those that we represent, Boughton has of course seen the most growth and we now welcome the newcomers to the village via Buckton Fields. Harlestone is to face the next phase of building locally; hopefully the experiences of the Buckton Fields development will be useful in managing the greater scope of new housing there.

For many years we have heard constituents' understandable moans that, "We pay tax to DDC and get nothing back". It is true that the centre of Daventry has been transformed to the great benefit of residents; the most recent investment is that of the new cinema, now complete and ready for its Opening Night. But with the massive investment in the new Moulton Leisure Centre, featuring one of the best swimming pools in the country, any imbalance has certainly been redressed. The recent DDC press release gives details:

"Facilities set to be opened to the public include the centre's six-lane, 25m swimming pool, and a 60-station gym featuring a wide range of modern fitness equipment.

A diverse range of other facilities, including two therapy pools, multi-activity studio, spin studio and the first health spa in the area - comprising a steam room, sauna and spa pool - will reopen when coronavirus restrictions are expected to be further lifted on 17 May."

On a parochial level, the council year began with the creation of the new Harlestone Manor Parish Council. John led the DDC process in its gestation. He chaired its first meeting for the purposes of the appointment of a chairman. The meeting was by Zoom. There was a tie, 8 members voting 4 - 4 for two candidates. What was to be done? He had a pack of cards to hand. An ace was chosen and one of the candidates invited to say whether it was red or black. The chairmanship was resolved on the turn of a card!

The year also saw planning permission being granted for the NWRR. We now concentrate on monitoring delivery of the mitigation measures. As Buckton Fields moves into Phase 3 we are active in pursuing two significant outstanding issues: community facilities and early years education. We have yet to see any firm proposals for either of these. They are very much work in progress.

During the year John was appointed to the task and finish group of the shadow authority setting the 2021/2022 budget and council tax. That involved some 15 Zoom meetings over an 8-month period.

As you all know, on the 6th May we will be going to the polls to elect a total of 93 councillors for the new unitary authority, West Northamptonshire Council, which will be formed on the 1st of April this year. This will replace the existing district, borough and county councils. Residents in Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire are being encouraged to apply early to vote by post. On the same day in May, residents will also be able to cast votes for the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and to elect representatives for many of their local parish councils. A lot of work has been done to make voting safely during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, with a range of Covid-safe measures being planned for polling stations, alongside the other usual options such as voting by post or by proxy. Polling arrangements are currently being organised by elections staff in Daventry District, South Northants and Northampton until the new Council is formed in April. We would encourage everyone to vote in these important elections.

We know that a huge amount of progress has made getting the new unitary Council ready and setting up the wider leadership team.

We were made aware of the rise in crime over recent months and raised these matters with the Northamptonshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire. House-to-house enquiries have been taking place in the areas where the break-ins have been reported and they have also been collecting CCTV to ascertain whether there is any footage of note that may help us identify suspects.

We know the Sgt has also held meetings with the some of the parish councils as well as the community safety partnership and held talks regarding the setting up of a local Street watch scheme.

The office of the Superintendent, Local Policing Commander (West) Northamptonshire Police informed us of intelligence gathering in respect of online marketplace disposal of items that have been stolen, ANPR research of vehicular movements during the period of note and ongoing patrol and proactive deployment of response and neighbourhood staff as well as Rural Crime Team and officers from Specialist Operations including Road Crime Team and Dog Support.

We all face new councils in May. To those retiring from parish council duty, we wish the very best. To those seeking to carry on we wish good fortune in your election process.

Report Received from County Councillor Judy Shephard (retired)

I was first elected your County Councillor for the Moulton Division in May 1997 and I have finally decided to retire some 24 years later, so this is my final report.

During my time on NCC I have served on many different committees and have chaired the Community Committee, the Adult Social Care and Health Committee twice, and the Development Control Committee twice! I was also elected Chairman of all the Select Committees of the Council. I was a member of the NHfT and the East Anglia Flood Committee. I was the NCC representative of the Northamptonshire Cadet Forces and was an Executive Member of SSAFA. I am also a member of Boughton Parish Council for almost 50 years and served a short term as its chairman. I have also been a Member of the Richard Humfrey Charity since the early 1980s and have been its chairman for the last 19 years.

In 2008 - 2010 I served two consecutive terms as Chairman of the Council which was a great and unforgettable honour. I sponsored two charities: SSAFA (The Armed Forces Charity) and FaceFax (a local head, neck and throat cancer charity founded by my sister) and raised over £17,000 during my terms as Chairman. I was privileged to meet, countywide and further afield, many inspirational people in all walks of life who have made exceptional contributions to our lives. My highlights of that time, apart from being presented to several members of the Royal Family and attending several Garden Parties, were my two civic dinners. My first guest speaker was General Sir Richard Dannatt,

then Head of the Army, and, secondly, Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, First Sea Lord. He invited me on a two-day trip aboard the Frigate HMS Westminster from South Shields to Portsmouth (a truly unrepeatabe experience!).

When I first became a County Councillor in 1997, I had 16 villages in my division, including Althorp which was reeling at that time over Princess Diana's untimely death. It was a very sharp learning curve as I was certainly plunged in at the deep end! Today, I have 13 villages and during my 24 years I have attended many parish council meetings and Annual Meetings and met a vast array of talented and dedicated parishioners, councillors and Chairmen, I have attended site visits, facilitated meetings and spoken publicly to help protect our cherished local heritage. I was a champion of Moulton Library which was under threat of closure. I have keenly locked horns with and challenged burdensome bureaucratic decisions on many diverse issues on my constituents' behalf in my quest for fairness, openness and progress.

The County Council will cease to exist next month. Our first NCC Chairman was The Red Earl, Lord Spencer in 1889 and during the Council's 133 years it has seen some remarkable history. Four years ago, due to unacceptably poor and creative accounting methods we were placed in special measures, and it was decided by Parliament that Northamptonshire would become two Unitary Authorities. During the last two years NCC has made huge strides financially, and we have now balanced the books and will be handing over some £90m to the new unitary councils as they become the fledgling Authorities.

It has been my privilege to be you County Councillor for 24 years! I wish to Thank you all for your kindness, wonderful humour and encouragement over the years. I have very happy memories!

Item 6: Community Policing Report (PCSO Paul Millar)

This is work in progress and so subject to operational change – so not to be regarded as Gospel. However, it will hopefully give you a flavour of what is on the cards.

A new Neighbourhood (NPT) structure is being put in place over the next few months – it is work in progress and so I haven't been given a specific date on when it will be complete. This is a Force-wide model.

Up until now the establishment has been 5 PC's + 11 PCSO's (5 sponsored) throughout the area.

We are increasing the number of PC's to 9.

Presently we have 5 PC's + 1 student who was recently recruited.

2 further PC's have been recruited but I am awaiting a start date as they have to be released from their departments. This gives 7 + 1 student.

We will be identifying another 1 which will give us 9 in total.

The number of PCSO's will remain at 11.

This will give 20 staff – the aim is to split the 20 into 4 teams of 5 covering:

- Daventry Town (sub-divided into East / West)
- Long Buckby (sub-divided into Long Buckby / Braunston & Crick)
- Weedon (sub-divided into Weedon / Woodford Halse)
- Brixworth (sub divided into Brixworth / Moulton)

In terms of Brixworth the aim is to have 2 x PC + 2 X PCSO + 1 x sponsored PCSO (Paul MILLER). The PCSO's are Kev LUMBIS, Jo WRIGHT, and Paul MILLER. The PC's for Brixworth have yet to be identified, but coverage is being provided from Daventry in the interim. Once we have the 9 then named Officers will be assigned.

Once everything is confirmed then you will have names, contact details and a map showing areas of responsibility. This should then appear on the Northants Police website.

Item 7: Report from David Slack, Althorp Estate

Wesleyan Chapel is now on the works list for renovate and preserve. Refurbishments of Brampton Hill Farmhouse begin in the next few months. Restoration works have taken place at Brampton Brook, focusing on water courses to improve the environment for wildlife and habitats. This feeds into a review of farming practices to bring conservation and wildlife to the fore. This includes regenerative farming, protecting water courses and protecting soils and decrease the chemical input and promote more ecologically sound methods. Introduction of beehives and promoting habitats for owls and bats.

The estate commits to planting trees where any trees are removed. Adey Greeno works a dedicated conservation officer although there are no specific plans to plant more trees in the parish.

Cllr JSL invited Mr Slack to liaise with the council regarding the beehives.

Item 8: Reports from Brampton's clubs and societies (if provided) - to receive and display

a. Brampton Primary School

b. St Botolph's (Report from Alison Gent & Jane Shearer)

Churchwardens - Ray Broom expressed his wish to retire in 2020. Jane Shearer agreed to be a churchwarden in waiting until such time as she could be elected at an APCM and then attend an Archdeacon's Visitation. This will be this June. Alison Gent will continue. Sadly, Ray died earlier this month after a short illness and many years' service to St Botolph's.

No new structural work has taken place. The Quinquennial survey was done in March 2021 and has highlighted several urgent repairs that need addressing - fundraising will be necessary to meet the costs.

The organ developed a fault in 2020 which required quite costly repairs to the organ blower. It has subsequently been retuned.

The wider events of 2020 have of course impacted how the church has been able to operate. After the lockdown in March 2020 services started to be held on Zoom, which have been well attended. The church itself was used only for a Midnight Communion at Christmas. During 2020 there were four funerals, one Baptism and one wedding.

In December 2020 Nicole Smerin collected donated gifts on each Sunday in Advent. These were passed to the Salvation Army. She did this as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award. Thanks to all who supported this initiative.

Our Rector Revd Andrea had neurosurgery during the past year and is making a steady recovery. During her post-operative recovery, Revd Kathryn worked tirelessly to support everyone, and she was ordained in September 2020. We are fortunate to have such excellent clergy.

New blue pew cushions have been purchased - these were gifted by Virginia Henley and anonymous donors. An outdoor bench for the churchyard was gifted by the Peel family in memory of Malcolm Peel.

Churchyard tidy-ups have taken place twice a year and any help are always welcome. There is always room for extra help with these tasks, the cleaning rota, church opening and closing rota etc. Any offers of help are always welcome - please contact Alison Gent or Jane Shearer.

We look forward to the church being used regularly for worship and other events over the coming year.

c. Footpath Warden (Jill & Duncan Slinn)

Generally, footpaths are in good condition. Parishioners continue to use the track up Brampton Hill Farm. Additional traffic has kept the paths clear but visitors are using paths which are not

d. Neighbourhood Watch (Cllr Richard Gent)

e. Discussion Group (Report from David Buxton)

Our 2020/21 session was held in the thrall of Covid 19 lockdowns resulting in all our home-based venues and visiting speakers being cancelled thus we had no meetings either to attend or for me to report upon. Indeed, we still must hold our deferred AGM for our members to elect William Shearer, our chairman-nominate and his officers.

Perhaps more than most organisations our ability to restart is inhibited by our long-established format of meeting in the homes of our members. We therefore look forward with growing enthusiasm to planning an exciting programme for the 2021/22 season and for safe conditions to hold them in.

A thank you for our understanding members for their continued intimations of support and encouragement as we all look to the future.

f. Spencer Club (Bill Rose)

No Report submitted

g. The Book Group (Elspeth May)

Book club meets every six weeks but this year the club has email, Zoomed, and met outside when allowed. The group hope to return to whole group meetings in July. Books include Arabs in Israel, French resistance, and Life as prostitute in Istanbul.

The telephone box is used as a book exchange with a great range of books.

h. Village Litter Pickers (report from Noah & Grace Finney)

Noah says he likes doing the litter picking job because he is happy that he is looking after nature and is concerned about the effect of plastic on birds and animals.

Grace says she finds the job rewarding; knowing that she is helping to protect the environment and keeping her village tidy.

In addition to these obvious benefits, I like the fact that it sets the children up from a young age with the mindset of doing their bit to improve the world. They get out for regular exercise and have the independence of earning and managing their own money. I think it's a perfect job for children of their age.

Lockdown created a huge increase in litter, predominantly alcohol cans/bottles and takeaway/food wrappers thrown by passing traffic. We also retrieved many medication packets and several vodka bottles filled with urine, presumably delivery drivers who had nowhere else to go while everywhere was shut. With an increase in the amount of people walking for exercise, the small minority that drop litter inevitably increased. The flip side is that keeping on top of the litter gave us something positive to focus on throughout the pandemic and a good reason for regular exercise. We took on some extra litter picks, picking up many bin bags along the Northampton Road and in the golf course/Firs. The good news is that with the ease of lockdown, litter levels have gone back to normal levels.

It's probably worth mentioning that the extra litter picking has taken it's toll on our equipment, that is now on its last legs. We could do with a couple of new litter picking sticks. We've also realised that they don't last as long when picking up glass bottles and maybe some heavy weight gardening type gloves might be a good addition.

Item 9: Open Discussion. Parishioners are invited to raise items relating to the parish, district, or county.

Keith Archibald. The hedge at number three Ten Cottages is greening up and is netted. Mr Archibald suggested that should the property lay vacant; it could be trimmed and the overhang which restricts access removed. Council recapped that responsibility for cutting rests with the property owners. Highways will only intervene if they consider there is a safety issue, in this instance highways have judged that it's not dangerous. While council agree that the overhang of the hedge does restrict access, the parish council only has powers to refer the matter to the WNC. Hedge on the junction of Walkers Lane and Harlestone Road. Request will be sent to Althorp requesting it be trimmed.

Item 10: Closing Comments

Chairman thanked the attendees for their contribution.

Item 11: To agree date for the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting. Thursday 19th May 2022