

Norton Lindsey Parish Council Annual Open Meeting held in the Village Hall at 8.00pm on 15 April 2015

Present: Cllr N Burns (Chairman); Cllr A Fowkes; Cllr J Stobart; Cllr T Fowler; Cllr R Mann; Cllr Miss A Birch; WCC Cllr L Caborn; and 27 members of the public

Apologies: Cllr Mrs J Lawton-Smith

Minutes of the Open Meeting held on 8 April 2014 were discussed, confirmed and signed.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then gave a brief run-through of the Council's activities throughout the year:-

- During the year the limitations of selling the affordable homes in Morgan Close were brought to the attention of the Parish Council. The Chairman described the Section 106 agreement which the properties in Morgan Close are subject to and how the affordable homes scheme works. He explained the differences between the Morgan Close development of affordable homes and the new scheme in the adjoining Brick Kiln Close which was built in 2011. The Chairman then advised that representations had been made to Stratford District Council (the local authority for both schemes) and the housing association operating Morgan Close to advise them of the difficulties in selling the properties due to the restrictions.
- The Chairman thanked the team who had produced the Village Parish Plan, and confirmed that the Parish Council had had no input in it. The Plan reflects what Village wants, not what the Parish Council wants. Although the final plan was presented to the Village in 2014, the Parish Council had been working on it throughout the last year, and the Chairman advised that Cllr Fowler would explain progress in more detail later in the Meeting.
- It was confirmed that a Footpaths map had been produced and distributed to households in the Parish. Additional copies were available through the Clerk.
- The Chairman advised that Cllr Fowler would discuss the latest status of bringing Superfast Broadband to the Village.
- With the Elections looming, the meeting was advised that four candidates had put themselves forward as Parish Councillors. The Chairman made a request for interested parishioners to step forward for co-option after the Election, to ensure the Village had a full complement of Councillors.
- It was confirmed that Warwickshire County Council had finally painted white lines on the bend at the bottom of Snitterfield Road. These lines had already made difference to traffic on this dangerous stretch of road.
- Although out of Norton Lindsey Parish the flooding by the Chapel at the junction of Watery Lane and the Henley Road had had an impact on Norton Lindsey. Following investigatory works, it looks as though the problem has been cured.
- Warwickshire County Highways had visited the Parish and met with Cllr Burns and Mr Neale to discuss all the works that need doing to clear blocked gullies and fix pot holes, along with other areas that come under County Highways remit and need looking at. It was noted that the road on the bend at Littleworth is in very poor repair. Norton Lindsey Parish Council had asked County Highways to look at the junction of Curliu Lane and the Henley Road with a view to reducing the sharpness of the turning, but County Highways advised that it was impossible due to services that are located under the verge.
- Over the course of the year there were fourteen planning applications in the Parish, most of which concerned cosmetic alterations with one or two bigger builds. The Chairman advised the meeting that if you have made a planning application to Warwick District Council, it is a good idea to approach the Parish Council to discuss your plans to enable the Councillors to have a clear idea of the planned works before the Parish Council makes its decision.
- The Chairman commented on the Jubilee memorial signpost which had been completed last summer, and explained how it had come about and the difficulties the Parish Council had faced in its planning and

construction. There had been great difficulty in finding an area at Red Horse Corner that did not have services underground preventing the signpost's erection, and further problems had arisen when it became evident that much of the verge at Red Horse Corner was actually owned by the bungalows off Curlieu Lane. The owner of Primrose Cottage very generously offered a piece of her land to erect the memorial, and offered a codicil that the signpost could remain on the land in perpetuity, but that was ruled out due to the underground services. Eventually, it was ascertained that the only place the Signpost could be erected did actually belong to Warwickshire County Council. The Chairman advised that Warwickshire's High Sheriff had officially unveiled the Signpost, and on behalf of the Village he thanked everyone who had been involved in the planning and construction of the Signpost, including those who had made financial donations at the beginning to the Mann's who had renovated the bench at Red Horse Corner in time for the unveiling. The Chairman finally advised that the Parish Council was chasing Warwick District Council for the remaining monies from a Grant that had still not been received.

Treasurer's Report

As reported two years ago, the Parish Council transferred £30,000 of the Capital Fund into a 2 year fixed term bond which offered a better interest rate than the money was earning sitting in the Council's Reserve Account. This bond matured last Autumn with an interest payment of nearly £2,043, far better than the £13 earned on the Reserve account in the year before the sum was transferred. The Parish Council is now looking for an alternative bond to transfer the money to, but is once again struggling to find a suitable account that will allow the Council to invest "public money". For your information, the Capital Fund is made up of £46,378, which is the "depot" money, and £3,500 which is retained for contested elections.

The Precept remained at £5,000 for 2014-2015, and the sum the Parish Council received for Concurrent Services was £769. The Council received a VAT refund of over £1,627, of which just under £1,103 was for the Jubilee Memorial and £441 was for the Parish Plan printing. As explained by the Chairman, the Parish Council was expecting to receive a grant of £1,200 from Warwick District Council towards the cost of the Jubilee Memorial, but as of today's date it still has not been received. Once it has been received, it will be added to the Capital Fund bringing the "depot" money to £47,578.

As reported last year the restructuring of the audit process meant that we are no longer charged audit fees, which has again saved the Council over £140 per year. However the insurance premium increased by just under £14 this year, and there was a £2 rise in the membership fee of the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils.

Staffing costs remained static, and administration costs were over £100 lower this year compared to the year before, mostly due to the purchase of essential reference books in the previous year.

Obviously, there was substantial expenditure on both the Parish Plan and the Jubilee Memorial, and these costs are detailed in the Accounts.

The Parish Council once again made a donation towards maintenance of the Church Clock / Chimes and the defibrillator, and supported local clubs in the Village. The Clerk would like to remind the Clubs that all donations must be acknowledged in writing, which is a requirement of the audit.

Parish Plan Update

Cllr Fowler advised that following the public consultation exercise last year, the Parish Council had taken ownership of the Parish Plan, and its primary role was to manage the Plan's Action List which contains 30 actions. The first action was that the Parish Council "actioned the actions". The Parish Council has prioritised the actions and agreed an annual review every June. Cllr Fowler made a proposal to review the Action List in March to be able to update the Village at the Open Meeting in April.

Ten of actions were seen as normal business, and the Chairman has discussed these in his report, eg. a Parish Footpaths Map has been done.

The next eight actions were deemed to be more about transport policy, infrastructure, policing, etc, which were not really issues that the Parish Council could resolve, but that would be taken to the quarterly forum run by Warwick District Council.

Three actions concerned the Village Hall and its amenities. Discussions have taken place with the Village Hall management committee and a proposal to build a new Village Hall are underway. The Parish Council will support the proposal financially and with Council processes, etc, if it can.

One action that the Parish Council has failed to achieve is with internet communication and a Village web site. However, new Government legislation regarding the Transparency Code is in place that means the Parish Council needs a website to publish essential documentation on a monthly basis. Therefore, this action will be addressed in the next few months.

The remaining actions were identified as low priority and will be reviewed in June, ie. feasibility studies which it was felt were a District Council issue not one for Parish Council. However, like the policy actions, these will be brought to the attention of the WDC Community Forum. Another one of these low priority actions was bringing a gas supply to the Village, and this action had been investigated. The first question that must be addressed is how many people are interested (a nominal 200 households required), and the costs are prohibitive. Following these investigations, this action is under review.

Broadband

The Coventry Solihull and Warwickshire (CSW) broadband project is to get Superfast Broadband to as many properties in these areas as possible. BT was appointed the projects chosen partner. Phase 1 commencing in April 2014 and should be finished by the summer of 2016.

Norton Lindsey in in Phase 2 of which the contract has just been negotiated with BT. It will roll out in the summer of 2016 and be finished in the summer of 2019. At this time there is no indication where Norton Lindsey lies in the roll out.

There is a village resident who is seeking an alternative way of getting Superfast Broadband to the Village and is currently trying to ascertain the level of interest within the Village.

There is also a recently announced Government Broadband Voucher Scheme to get broadband to more people. However, there is a specific application criteria, and it currently only applies to charitable organisations and businesses.

Report by Warwickshire County Councillor Les Caborn:

Cllr Caborn advised that he is the County Councillor for the Budbrooke Division, and covers the parishes of Barford, Bishops Tachbrook, Hampton Magna, Hampton on the Hill, Norton Lindsey, Sherbourne and Wasperton.

Budget

Following on from last years' 4 year Financial Plan, WCC set a budget at 1.9% increase. Within the budget it put an additional £2million into safer environments around schools to be spent over the next 2 years and Cllr Caborn will be part of the team dealing with it. This is in addition to WCC dangerous school routes funding and will work together. All schools will be assessed and works done in partnership with schools. WCC also put £4million to changing to LED street lighting. WCC has increased savings over the £600k we have already saved by turning off lights. There does not appear to be any change in crime through this measure.

The money formerly allocated by area to Districts has been divided between Councillors for highway safety works. This gives Cllr Caborn £32k to spend on capital funding. However, this is top sliced to deal with particular safety concerns in Warwick District area including Watery Lane. The balance of £26k is for Cllr Caborn's discretionary use but he already has schemes and bids from residents and parishes amounting to £97k before he allocates for rural gullies and additional cleaning out to help recent road flooding.

In addition Cllr Caborn has put £4k into the Warwick West Community Forum Grants Fund. WCC has won the contract for supplying Audit services to Worcestershire County Council as part of its work to obtain outside contracts on a commercial basis.

WCC continues to increase its participation and influence in the working of the Local Enterprise Partnership to gain economic growth and funding for Warwickshire. WCC does not support the moves to build a large economic area based on Birmingham as our growth area, based on data and facts, covers from Leicester to Banbury/Oxford. WCC is looking at working with our Shire Neighbours as it already does with Coventry in the joint LEP.

Highways are going out to tender for a contractor for its highways work as Balfour Beatty do not wish to exercise their option to extend the existing contract

Community Safety

Cllr Caborn took the opportunity to run through some of the areas he covers in his role as Cabinet Member for Community Safety.

1. Fire and Rescue continues to spend around 60% of its time effecting rescue. This means the reorganisation going on is vital to ensure full cover to residents and to maintain full training for firefighters. Projects being carried out to achieve this are a new hot fire trading facility, refurbishment of HQ, introduction of day crew plus at Alcester and Stratford, and a new fire delivery unit at Gaydon, all within this year.
2. Trading Standards have been very successful with national recognition for fake cosmetics being imported via Coventry Airport, Wellesbourne Market goods, holiday time share scams and prosecutions in Warwickshire for faulty garage work and unsafe used cars.
3. Flooding. As WCC is now the Statutory Flood Authority (SFA) it is working with communities to help them prevent flooding by local intervention. WCC is also the statutory consultee with the planning authorities, and has also secured approximately £6m for flood schemes from EA.
4. The WCC Priority Families Unit is nationally top of the results tables, meaning Warwickshire has been awarded a further 4 years funding to expand the service. In the past 4 years WCC is credited with turning around 1000 families with major problems with crime, school attendance and unemployment. Alongside this the Youth Justice Service WCC provides continues to have one of the best rates of stopping reoffending nationally.
5. Drugs and Alcohol teams work with people with all alcohol related problems and drug usage, as well as working with Trading Standards on prosecuting retailers who break the law.
6. Road Safety operates speed cameras on WCC controlled roads working with the Police. WCC also carries out road safety in schools and do driver training for private companies alongside its speed awareness work with drivers. It supports villages in their own speed recording work. Unfortunately road accidents have increased over the last year in line with national trends, including motor cyclists, so WCC is relaunching its Be Aware campaigns.

Following the Boundary Commissions Review of WCC, for the 2017 elections this division will have added to it Hatton and Shrewley because it has been declared as overrepresented on numbers of residents per councillor.

Finally Cllr Caborn advised that he had arranged a one to one meeting with the new Chief Constable and, etc.

Cllr Caborn finished his report by thanking the Chairman, Councillors and Clerk for their help and support over the last year.

Matters causing concern:

The Chairman opened the Meeting for any questions.

Q. Why has the dog bin on Canada Lane been changed to a red one?

A. The existing bin was damaged and was replaced by WDC who now bus red bins.

Q. Does the Parish Council have any plans to deal with the problem of speeding on Wolverton Road?

A. This has been an ongoing problem for a long time. The Parish Council has carried out speed checks in the past. The PCSO does carry out checks, and there is the speed warning sign by Mill Close that flashes on if traffic is above the speed limit. There is not a lot more that can be done.

Cllr Caborn suggested that a group of Villages undertake training by police to enable them to amass data which can then be taken to the County who will analyse the data to see what else can be done. He confirmed that roads were becoming rat runs.

General discussion then took place during which it was stated that the Police don't do much speed control work, and a suggestion was made that chicanes are effective. Cllr Caborn disagreed and advised that speed guns are the only way. The road humps and other traffic calming measures in Snitterfield were discussed, and Cllr Caborn advised that the average cost of installing one road hump is £17,000, which is made up of design work and road safety assessment (both carried out for each individual location), as well as the actual construction. One resident asked if technology is available that could be adapted to record the number of times the speed warning sign flashes. Cllr Caborn advised that this technology does not exist, but that Warwick West Community Forum has alternative equipment (ie. speed guns) that could be borrowed by Norton Lindsey and the residents trained in using.

- Q. Concerns were raised regarding a planning application at Furlong, Canada Lane, and removal of hedging, etc.
- A. The meeting was advised that concerns were noted and would be considered when the Parish Council received and deliberated the planning application.

Open Discussion:

There was no open discussion.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.