

# MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 7.00pm in the Old School Hall, School Lane, Harpole.

Meeting chaired by the Chairman of Harpole Parish Council, Mrs M Jones

Attended by Parish Cllrs:; D Ballard, B Briscoe, J Calderwood; S Eason, B Justice, B Gibbins, R Gibbins, D S Starmer, C Wilkinson.

Parish Council Clerk, G Ravine; 7 residents.

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**1. Apologies** S Roberts, Cllr J Kirkbride, Cllr A Addison, Cllr Cooper.

**2. Minutes of the 2015 meeting.**

It was proposed seconded and agreed that the 2015 minutes be approved.

The chairman duly signed the minutes.

**3. Matters Arising.** None.

**4. Annual report by the Chairman of the Parish Council**

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – 2016**

2015/2016 has been a very busy year.

Planning has dominated the agendas along with developing the neighbourhood plan and these two items have kept most of us very busy along with the ongoing dog poo crisis.

These three items show the real work of a parish council. The life changing problem of the proposed developments that will increase the number of people living and working within the parish massively and the parish councils struggle to give our parishioners as much say as possible in the future of their village via a comprehensive neighbourhood plan. Within the minutiae of village life, which PCs are renowned for dealing with, Dog poo and fly tipping are very much to the forefront of people's minds. I think it safe to say that we are always disappointed by people's inability to care about their surroundings. However that doesn't stop us working against the rising tide of debris littering our countryside.

In our fight to ensure that Harpole is not ignored as developers plan to tear up our countryside, make large amounts of money and move on, Harpole has joined forces with two other PCs, Harlestone and Duston. The tri briefings, as we are calling them, enable us to attract the policy makers and the planning officers to enter into open debate with us as we put forward all of our concerns. These meetings are quite intense but also productive and I thank DB and SR for attending them with me.

Planning applications in and around our area can be emotive, but the 3 dwellings along Larkhall Lane caused emotions to run very high. Despite all of the parish council and parishioners hard work the final decision went against us. Sarah and I saw the council at work in the development control hearing at SNC and it was difficult to watch. Following the decision words and e mails were exchanged with our DCs, as we felt let down, and the relationship became broken. However as a PC we have put this behind us and hope to rebuild bridges with our DCs. I have this month written to Councillor Addison to thank her for the comprehensive and accurate letter she submitted with regard to J16.

HAT has continued the process of devising the neighbourhood plan and it is good to see their hard work coming to fruition. This has involved extra work outside of the meetings of HAT and I thank Lorraine Colin Jeremy Brian J Sonja SARAH David B for their sterling efforts in gathering all of the evidence necessary to create the document.

The allotments are seeming to flourish under their new association with such projects as Bee world and other new ideas in the pipeline. Old hedges are being removed and new fencing erected with the input and cooperation of the headmaster of the school.

Highways, parking, chewed up verges, potholes and uneven pavements are dealt with via our highways committee and we are having some success. The leak in upper high street seems to have been successfully repaired and our contact S. Mann has plans to repair the road from the turnpike to the top of upper high street. We await these repairs and others scheduled around the village. Parking thoughtlessly is an ongoing blight on people's lives that we seem powerless to do anything about.

We continue to observe and report the unhygienic state of the Red Lion lay-by and rejoiced when the bus was finally sold and moved.

A large part of our work between meetings is done via e mail, sometimes even having to make an important decision and so requiring everyone to respond. However I have to thank Simon for always replying to every e mail. His comments are mostly positive and it is nice to know someone is out there listening.

When Sarah stepped down last year and put my name forward I thought how hard can it be, Sarah always looked quite serene in the role.

However I was mistaken. Trying to keep everyone happy is an impossible but interesting challenge for us.

I feel I have learnt a lot in this past year, made a few mistakes certainly, but I have to admit to having enjoyed myself, sometimes.

Parish council is the lowest or first tier of local government and we are also the cheapest.

Every one of us who sits here for the monthly meetings, the meetings of all the sub committees we are on and the daily mound of e mails we answer, we do so as volunteers. I thank you all for your volunteering and support.

**5. Financial Report.** The clerk circulated income and expenditure figures for 2015. - 16, and gave a brief report on the financial situation, outlining the major areas of expenditure, and answering questions on the accounts. Council has a good healthy position with reserves enough to cover all but the worst eventualities.

**6. Reports from County and District Councillors.**

### **Annual Report 2016**

This year saw the County Council embark on the biggest transformation of the council in our history.

We are looking to improve outcomes for consumers, customers and citizens, how our vision will make the council more financially secure and that deliver our vision of "Making Northamptonshire a Great Place to Live and Work".

As the organisation moves to a Next Generation Council model, we will see a smaller retained organisation (NCC Group) commissioning services from a new set of accountable organisations and social enterprises which will be owned, managed and run by current council staff with partners.

The first of these delivery vehicles, First for Wellbeing official launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. *First for Wellbeing* is the enterprise commissioned by the Council and partners to deliver joined up wellbeing services to help people in the county live a happy and healthy life and as such will focus on the preventative agenda, in order to delay or stop people from requiring more expensive and intrusive social care and NHS services. Operating as an enterprise in its own right, this Community Interest Company will ultimately be able to secure additional income and new business to help increase the Council's and partners' financial security.

We believe this is the way forward for public service delivery in Northamptonshire. Two years ago, Northamptonshire Archaeology was in danger of being subjected to significant budget reductions. However, instead of pursuing this route, the Council entered into a Strategic Alliance

with the Museum of London Archaeology to deliver such services in partnership. This past year has seen a real realisation of the benefits of the transformation of Northamptonshire Archaeology. Since the move, Northamptonshire MOLA is thriving and has doubled its turnover and its staff numbers have increased from 42 to 78.

Northamptonshire is a growing county, and we have seen the growth in population as a strong trend over the last decade. Over the next 5 years we expect to see an increase of over 50,000 in the numbers of people living in Northamptonshire, with the most pronounced increase being in the numbers of people aged 70 and over. These levels of growth have a significant impact on all services, from roads, waste management and school places, to targeted support such as social care for older people and people with disabilities, or safeguarding services for children.

Our schools are a particularly pressurised area, with four new schools opened since September 2015 to accommodate the additional demand.

Between 2008 and 2017, the Council would have added 14,000 additional primary school places. Since the start of the current school year there have been almost 900 children arriving in the county needing a school place. We require 31 new schools by the end of this plan.

#### **Children's Trust**

As part of the next stage of improvement in Children's Services, we have begun work with the Department for Education to look at setting up a Northamptonshire Children's Trust. In line with the Next Generation Council, the Trust will enable services for children to be improved and sustained over the medium to long term.

Within a Trust model we will be able to significantly improve the terms and conditions of employment in order to reduce our dependence on agency workers. As a result the Trust model will be more affordable and deliver a more stable workforce.

#### **Social Work Academy**

Our successful Social Work Academy is improving our capacity to recruit and retain high quality Social Work staff and reduce reliance on agency staff, therefore reducing costs and case stability in our caseload. Northamptonshire County Council's new Social Work Academy has been praised by Isabelle Trowler, the Government's Chief Social Worker for Children and Families during her visit to the Academy in April to find out more about the training and support it offers newly-qualified social workers and meet the first group of graduates who completed the programme this summer.

#### **Regional Adoption Agency**

Northamptonshire has joined with five other Local Authorities and two voluntary organisations as part of a Department for Education regional adoption agency project. This will see our adoption service joined with others to benefit from a greater pool of prospective adopters and adoptees. This will mean that children are adopted quicker and will spend less time in care.

#### **Fire and Rescue**

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has reduced its call-outs to false alarms by 66 per cent over the past seven years. In 2008/09, the county's fire service responded to 2,741 unwanted fire signals, which happen when an automatic fire detection system is activated even though a fire has not occurred. Following a thorough risk assessment, a policy which sets out when the fire service will respond to automatic fire alarms bringing the level of unnecessary call-outs below 1,000 a year for the first time.

Our specialist boat rescue team from Northamptonshire supported the flood rescue efforts in Cumbria as part of the fire and rescue service's national resilience arrangements.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service received the request to support the major incident on Sunday (6 December). Water Rescue Technicians from Mereway and Wellingborough fire stations were deployed to Cumbria, taking a specialist water rescue boat unit and boat.

#### **Support for Dementia Sufferers**

In Northamptonshire it is believed that some 8,000 people suffer from dementia; by 2030, this figure is expected to nearly double. More people with dementia are returning to their own homes after a hospital admission thanks to a new initiative between health and social care.

Our Older Persons Mental Health Pathway project, led by Northamptonshire County Council and NHS Nene Clinical Commissioning Group, has resulted in 57% of dementia patients being discharged back to their own home, compared with 11% in December 2013.

The County Council contributed £223,000 to fund eight beds for patients ready to be discharged from hospital but not yet ready to return home. A further £410,000 was provided by the Better Care Fund – a health and social care partnership fund – to enhance staffing levels and improve the community team.

#### **Northampton International Academy**

Work has begun to transform a former Royal Mail sorting office in Barrack Road, Northampton into a modern all-through school for up to 2,200 pupils. The shell will be retained and incorporated into the design of the new school, which will open to pupils in September 2017.

The Northampton International Academy will cater for pupils aged two to 19 with an all-through school provided by academy sponsor the EMLC Academy Trust, which also runs the neighbouring Castle Primary School.

The £25million building project is being largely funded by the government's Education Funding Agency and will help to meet the forecast need for 580 new secondary school places in Northampton by 2021.

There will be highway improvements to Barrack Road including enhanced pedestrian crossings and safety railings, while a school pick-up and drop-off point will be created to the rear of the building via a new junction. The plans for the school also include a playground to the rear of the building, rooftop sports pitches and use of the playing fields at Castle Primary School.

#### **A45 Development**

Work on the A45 Daventry development link road has officially started with a sod-cutting ceremony officially launching construction work. A45 development link is vital for long-term growth in the Daventry area and improve access between Daventry and the M1 motorway.

The £32million single carriageway which would also effectively provide a by-pass for the villages of Flore, Upper Heyford and Weedon has been made possible through an innovative county council-led funding scheme.

The project has been paid for through an innovative finance arrangement known as the Northamptonshire revolving infrastructure fund, which unites funding streams and sees local authorities, developers and contractors working together to put the money in place. This approach has been possible because of the county council funding the design, planning and implementation costs upfront.

Designed and constructed by KierWSP and Balfour Beatty, the link road will start at a new roundabout on the existing A45 between the settlements of Dodford and Weedon, to the east of Globe Farm. It will then pass to the north of the villages of Weedon, Flore and Upper Heyford before rejoining the A45 at a new roundabout between Upper Heyford and the M1 motorway at junction 16. The road has also been designed so that it could become a dual-carriageway in the future.

#### **Superfast Northamptonshire broadband**

The County Council's Superfast Northamptonshire project, which has an ambitious target to see superfast broadband available countywide by the end of 2017, has completed its £12.9 million first stage three months ahead of schedule. Since stage one began in March 2013, fibre broadband infrastructure has been installed as part of a network which serves over 61,300 premises in the county, of which more than 57,500 now have access to superfast broadband (download speeds above 24Mbps).

Working with BT, superfast broadband (download speeds above 24Mbps) has also been made available to more premises than originally expected, helping Northamptonshire remain one of the top performing broadband projects in the country. Across the county, more than 53,900 homes/ businesses which otherwise wouldn't be served – many of them in rural areas - are now able to take up superfast broadband services. In addition, thousands more have seen an increase in speed and can now benefit from faster fibre broadband. The original contract runs until March 2016, and the work has been delivered more than three months earlier than planned, and under budget. Work is already underway on a second Superfast Northamptonshire contract that was awarded to BT by the county council in November 2014. This will extend the availability of superfast broadband to an additional 20,450 homes and businesses by December 2017. Around 90 per cent of households and businesses in Northamptonshire can now take up a fibre broadband service. Superfast Northamptonshire is a multi-million pound project, which has already involved the installation of more than 300 new green roadside fibre broadband cabinets and structures and the laying of more than 490 kilometres of underground cable. The county council has secured £16.2 million of public funds committed through two contracts with BT, including contributions from Government, the county council and local partners. BT are investing £6.9m. The high-speed network installed by BT's local network business, Openreach, is available on an open, wholesale basis to all internet service providers (ISPs), therefore offering Northamptonshire households and businesses the benefit of real choice from a highly competitive market. Digital Economy Minister Ed Vaizey, has visited the county to see the progress made by the Superfast Northamptonshire project. The Minister saw how the multi-million pound contracts between Northamptonshire County Council and BT have benefitted residents and businesses across the county. The county council has ambitions to see the whole of Northamptonshire benefit and has already secured plans for 96 per cent of the county to be able to access superfast broadband by December 2017 (when combined with existing and planned commercial coverage). Together, the first two stages of the project will see more than 73,850 premises benefit from access to superfast broadband by December 2017, involving a £16.2m public commitment and £6.9m from BT. Stage One has come in under budget and these savings will help to support the next stage of the project which is now being progressed by the county council following cabinet backing in October 2015.

#### Angel Street

Work on Northamptonshire County Council's new headquarters is progressing well as the £53million complex starts to take shape. The work is being carried out by contractor Galliford Try and it is expected that the building will be formally handed over to the county council after completion by the end of October 2016 with full occupation by December of that year. The project will see county council staff moved out of 12 buildings in Northampton, including County Hall, into one purpose-built headquarters in the town centre.

#### Northamptonshire Highways

Northamptonshire Highways was developed by merging the county council's highways and transport department with the authority's highways contractor, KierWSP, to form a single integrated team. This year the team won the Highways Partnership Award 2015 at the Highway's Magazine Excellence Award Ceremony in London. Northamptonshire Highways was recognised for creating a new, efficient service which has increased performance while delivering £2.2million savings annually since its inception in 2012/2013.

Northamptonshire Highways functions with elected councillors working with a retained small team of county council highways and transport experts still deciding on which policies and standards the service should deliver. Advantages to the new model include a new management structure which allows decisions to be made more easily with less duplication of roles and an improved team culture. The Northamptonshire Highways Cycle CoNnect scheme was also highly commended in an award for environmental sustainability in the highways sector.

#### UNITARY AUTHORITIES - UNITARY COUNCILS

The seven Northamptonshire MPs have asked the County Council together with the District and Borough councils to consider unitary authorities. The County Council has asked Northampton University and a private consulting company to look at the options for unitary authorities in the County. South Northants Council are considering joining with Oxfordshire's options for Unitary authorities.

This is an important decision for us as any change will affect our front line services and where they are administered. I will keep you informed of the progress of the report and the options. This should not be a decision made by Whitehall or behind closed doors in our Councils.

Joan Kirkbride April 2016

### SOUTH NORTHANTS COUNCIL REPORT - To Harpole Parish Council APM 2016

#### **From Cllr. Ann Addison & Cllr Karen Cooper**

- I will be proposing a Motion to the SNC Full Council on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April, asking for £100,000 to be set aside from unallocated funds to help fight the Rail Central / Ashfield proposal to develop 8 million square feet of land in between Milton Malsor & Blisworth with industrial warehousing & a rail freight terminal. Cllr Cooper, Cllr Davies (SNC Ward Member for Blisworth) & I have issued a press release outlining the Motion. It is hoped that as many people as possible will attend the Council meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> showing support for the motion.
- **SNC budget** – Net budget of £11.78 million. The core funding is from the Government which has once again been reduced by £600,000. It is understood that the squeeze on local government will continue until 2020. This has caused a rise in SNC's Council tax for the first time in 5 years.
- **Waste Recycling** – SNC recycles 59.9% of all waste, thanks to the blue & green bin service. As a result, SNC was the best at recycling in Northamptonshire, the East Midlands & 11<sup>th</sup> overall in the country.
- **A43 Improvements** – Work on the Tove roundabout (Tesco/VW) has resulted in improvements & work has now been completed. Work is underway on the Abthorpe roundabout (McDonalds) and will run for the next 12/18 months.
- **SNC Local Plan 2** – Will be considering all the village confines and will seek to put them in place where they do not exist. The plan is out for general consultation and is scheduled for adoption in Autumn 2018.
- **SNC's Land Supply** – The Government require all Councils to have a 5 year land supply. Currently SNC has a 7 year land supply.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – SNC adopted CIL on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. It will apply to many smaller developments that did not pay S106 monies in the past. The charge applies to residential & new retail space with differing amounts for Towcester & Brackley Towns & the more rural areas. There are national exemptions within the regulations for houses for your own use provided you live in it for at least 3 years after completion. Parish Councils are entitled to 15% of all CIL monies or 25% if there is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place, capped at £100 per existing house in the Parish.
- **Joint Working** – During 2015 /16 SNC has continued to deliver savings by increased joint working with Cherwell District Council. To date, over £3 million has been saved from the 2 Council's annual budgets. As well as the Management Team, all back office services are now shared.

- **Unitary Status** – Oxfordshire has been in talks / discussions with its Borough & District Councils regarding forming unitary authorities. SNC have started preliminary discussions with Cherwell DC / Oxfordshire as well as with Northamptonshire. It is early days as yet, and no decisions have been made by any Council as to the way forward at present.

## **7. Reports from Village Organisations and societies**

### **HARPOLE BOWLS CLUB (HBC)**

REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

MONDAY 11<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2016

The club was formed 30 years ago and plans are being made for members to celebrate this important milestone later this year.

Since the club's inception considerable work has been undertaken, mainly by members, to improve the site & premises and it is reasonable to claim that our facilities are amongst the very best in the County.

We are rightly proud of our recognised compliance with Health & Safety, Risk Assessment, Food Hygiene Safety Standards etc. and the steps taken to ensure the safety and comfort of all users whether members, visitors or hirers.

Our membership @ 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 is 98 with over 90 playing members. Our numbers have hovered around 100 for several years which is remarkable considering the fact that most sports are experiencing falling memberships. Unfortunately, too few of our members are Harpole residents and we would welcome any initiative designed to remedy this!

The club offers year-round bowling via indoor short mat and outdoors bowls during the summer. Members can enjoy a varied programme to suit their needs and competitive spirit!

The club has a mixed programme of social events during Autumn / Winter months and, except Christmas Lunch, these are open to non-members.

The club is financially secure and is able to fund ongoing, essential maintenance and prioritised improvements. Careful management by the committee has kept the annual subscriptions and match fees etc. affordable and attractive.

The club endeavours to support the community and recent examples are:

Earlier this year, when approached by Councillor Rita Gibbins we agreed to fund cutting the hedge that borders our site and the allotments. This arrangement has been in place for some years and will continue.

Recent collaboration with Harpole Primary School to provide a safe location in the event of an emergency.

We would welcome an ongoing dialogue to build a mutually beneficial partnership operating in the best interests of all concerned.

Fred Watson Secretary 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

### **The Combined Harpole Charitable Trust**

#### **Harpole Free School Foundation**

Report for the Annual Meeting of Harpole Parish Council 11 April 2016

Harpole Free School Foundation has historically provided extra financial support for the education of children attending Harpole School. Income derives from the rental of agricultural land, currently leased to Jim and Patrick Green. There is also annual rental from Harpole Youth Club.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 the Foundation was linked with the Harpole Charities to form a new trust with the name of the Combined Harpole Charitable Trust. This was done to put the two charities on an up-to-date legal basis and to provide legal protection for the Trustees which they did not previously have. The objects of the Combined Trust encompass the original purposes of the Free School Foundation and the Harpole Charities which are to benefit the residents of Harpole and the surrounding area, to relieve those in needy circumstances by reason of hardship or health, social or economic circumstances and to advance education and improve educational facilities particularly for children and young people. The funds of the two founding charities remain separate and the administration of the funds and business of those charities remain with the trustees of the original charities but under the umbrella of the new Trust.

The present trustees representing the Harpole Free School Foundation are The Revd Stephen French, Rector of Harpole, Jeremy Calderwood and Allan Leroy, churchwardens, Cathy Briscoe nominated by Harpole P C and Joan Kirkbride nominated by Northamptonshire County Council.

Income for the year ended 31.12.2015 was £1,688.62. Expenditure during the year was £1,007.72 which was for professional fees in connection with the proposed sale of land and also for insurance. The current account on 31 December 2015 stood at £31,813.44.

Further to my previous report, the negotiations with Bloor Homes for the sale of the Trust's land north of the Nobottle Road for housing are continuing. The Trustees have been involved in lengthy and detailed discussions aimed at obtaining the best possible outcome from the sale of this land consistent with the purposes of the Trust.

Allan Leroy

Chairman of the Combined Harpole Charitable Trust.

### **School GOVERNORS REPORT 2016**

Pupil numbers at the end of 2015 stood at 206 with four out of the seven classes having 30 pupils in them. The whole school attendance at the end of the year was 97.2%.

Last Year saw a New Head Teacher – Mr Duncan Thorpe be appointed, following the resignation of the previous head.

One member of staff left at the end of the Easter Term to go on to maternity leave. A cleaning firm has been given a contract for 20 hours per week, leaving the site supervisor to focus on maintenance, other jobs and duties.

A phased maintenance has begun to happen around the school with new internal doors being installed in the reception area and CCTV updated. New fencing has been installed along with automatic gates at the front. The School is working with the Free School Foundation and in due course the conifer hedge surrounding the site will be cut back and various maintenance will be carried out in the long term. (This is shown in the summary received by the PC from the head teacher).

Quotes are currently being sought to replace the flat roof, which has been and is currently leaking in to most of the classrooms.

There has been quite a lot of staff training taking place including First Aid, Ofsted, Cystic Fibrosis & Child Protection.

The School was visited in October by Ofsted HMI and remains a 'Good' status.

Writing is a focus across the school – with stages put in to the School Development Plan to help the staff to achieve the standards needed.

Children are given lots of areas to write about with both hot & cold writing tasks.

Sadly the outdoor swimming pool has become too high a cost for the school to maintain, and it is hoped that a village organisation or another group would be able to take on the maintenance of it and lease it out to others. There will be a meeting at the beginning of May to discuss this with relevant people.

This is my last report as a Governor – my term I have enjoyed, however I can no longer give the time needed to support the School as they go forward. I thank the staff and the Governors for their work, which they carry out often behind the scenes.

**8. Questions.** None – DB commended the Chair for all her hard work at and outside meetings, and a vote of thanks was given.

*There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 8.10 pm.*