

MINUTES OF NORTHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

Swarraton and Northington Village Hall

7.30pm on Tuesday, 23rd of May 2017

Present: John Mitchell (JM, Chairman)
Adam Dyne (AD)
Yvonne White (YW)
Alexandra Risebury (AR, Clerk)
Jackie Porter (JP, Councillor)
17 residents

Apologies: Melissa Jennings (MJ)
Simon Walker (SW)
Lisa Griffith (LG, Councillor)

The Chairman welcomed all present.

1) Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of last year's annual meeting held on the 17th of May 2016 were circulated to all present. Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Peter Lamb and seconded by Michael Brodrick. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

2) Matters arising

a) JM expressed his thanks to the Village Hall committee for all the hard work that they do for the village.

b) Since our last AGM in 2016, one of our councillors, Fleur Boyce, had died. Her death was a deep shock to all of us and she is much missed. Fleur did a lot for our parish, cajoling and exhorting Scottish and Southern Electric (SSE) and Hampshire County Council's roads department.

Yvonne White has kindly agreed to take on Fleur's responsibilities.

c) In the autumn of 2016, Melissa Jennings volunteered to join the Parish Council and was returned unopposed. The NPC welcomed Melissa warmly.

d) Public opposition to the threatened closure of the Recycling Centre in Alresford had been effective. The Centre has not closed, though the opening hours have changed. The centre no longer accepts DIY waste. JM thanked Jackie Porter for her involvement in the lobbying to save the Centre.

e) Questions about the use/misuse of the field opposite AD's house remain. Kim Gottlieb has been briefed and further action depends on the wishes of those immediately affected.

3) Chairman's report

I) BROADBAND

A positive outcome and AR will present SW's report in Paragraph 5. We relied heavily on Simon's advice and are grateful to him. Our campaign to secure Northington's place in the broadband queue, undoubtedly benefitted from our behind the scenes lobbying using the good offices of Jackie Porter and Steve Brine.

II) PLANNING

The AM is not the proper forum at which to review the catalogue of planning applications, however, JM is not happy with matters as they now stand. In one case, which had generated a lot of correspondence, Winchester City Council planners told NPC very late in the day that the Parish Council had no locus in the matter. JM is also unhappy with the formulation - "The Parish Council does not oppose this application". In one instance, an applicant wrongly took this phrase to mean support. This is unsatisfactory.

JM has talked to the planners and asked them to set out just what our competences really are. It seems that the current planning view is that a PC does not need to feel too hog-tied, when taking a view on an application. JM has urged the planners to follow up their expressed intention of organising a meeting for a cluster of our local Parish Council members, at which the planners can brief officials and where members can flag up difficulties.

III) GRANGE FESTIVAL

NPC wishes the Grange Festival's every success with their first season. Receipts from the sale of dress rehearsal tickets are earmarked for the Friends of St. John's Church. The Festival is committed to carrying on with its open days and will shortly be installing

“perching” seats. JM had been asked by GF to thank the many members of the village who have helped out with publicity and more recently with preparations at The Grange.

IV) B3046

YW will report in paragraph 7 and explain the struggle NPC faces in order to persuade Hampshire County Council to reduce speed limits.

V)) TAG4 - FARNBOROUGH

Northington Parish Council, along with our neighbouring parish councils, is keeping a watching brief. The latest development is that interested councils are writing to “Number Ten” to seek a formal review nationwide of the use of local airspace. The Council has put its name on the list of petitioners.

VI) POLICING and NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Elaine Capp continues to look after our interests and NPC is very grateful for her work.

VII) CHIPPING DEPOT

JM read out an email, received on 18th May 2017, from Jenny Nell, Winchester Council’s Head of Strategic Planning

“Mr Mitchell

Thank you for your comments on behalf of Northington Parish Council to our recent consultation exploring options as how to address the gypsy and traveller accommodation need in the Winchester District.

We have received a number of comments from local residents on the site identified in the Peter Brett Study, recorded as W038 Northington Chipping Depot.

This site is owned by Hampshire County Council who have confirmed that the site is not available for further consideration as part of our gypsy and traveller plan as it is required to be retained for operational or policy purposes. For sites to be considered they must be suitable and available - so unless the landowner is willing to make the site available, it will not come forward.

On this basis, the Council will not be considering this site any further in preparing the draft Traveller plan which will be presented to the Council’s Cabinet (Local Plan) Committee at the end of June for approval for public consultation.

I hope this clarifies the position in relation to this site.

Regards

Jenny Nell

Head of Strategic Planning”

This short statement from Winchester informs NPC in terms that consideration of the Chipping Depot for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showmen occupation will not go ahead. It does not, however, reveal what tremendous trouble residents took to put across their views to the planners. JM said he was speaking for the entire Parish Council, when he said that we were amazed by and grateful for the amount of skill, time and determination that our Parish showed. NPC was and remains truly grateful for your support.

The above statement inevitably does not indicate the sort of help that we received from our local councillors and our former Member of Parliament. It is invidious to mention names but they are Jackie Porter, Ernie Jeffs, Kim Gottlieb and Steve Brine, who were with us all the way. There are surely others who deserve our thanks.

If one were to draw a lesson from our campaign over Site W038, it would be that individuals working together CAN make a difference.

VIII) THE NORTHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman thanked his fellow councillors on behalf of the residents for their work for the village.

SW brings great expertise to the Northington Parish Council with regards to broadband provision. He set up our website and very importantly tweaked it, when it needed fixing. He also keeps an eye on footpaths issues.

MJ has now found her feet and is expected to be taking on some tasks on the village's behalf.

YW keeps SSE up to the mark – they are at this moment making good the damage done to the Millennium path by the temporary installation of generators. She has also kindly agreed to keep an eye on B3046 matters, which includes dealing with HGV problems.

AD's organisational skills and charisma are legendary and they help him to get us out with our black sacks for village clean-ups. In terms of community cohesion Adam contributes a great deal to life in our village.

AR keeps us informed about things that need to be done and the parameters within which we can do them. She also keeps us financially sound. It's a big job and we should all be clear that the PC would not function so well without Alex's hard work.

4) Councillors report

JP said that she was very pleased for NPC with the outcome of the Chipping depot and remarked on our wonderful community, which is based on trust.

JP also reported about "Boomtown" Festival, which will take place in the 2nd week of August. JP chairs the meetings with the community over several weeks (issues covered

are drug use, litter, emergency services and traffic). The biggest criticism last year had been the lack of access for emergency services. As a result, this year the festival organisers will provide their own emergency services.

In the wake of last year's gridlock, UK Highways Department will attend a meeting at the ARK (Basingstoke) to look into traffic issues. JP was unable to provide an exact date.

JP is a great supporter of the Lengthsman scheme, not only because footpaths are kept clear but it also proves cost effective. HCC would have to pay considerably more if it were to be responsible for the upkeep of village roads and verges.

JP added her condolences to the victims and families affected by the horrific terror attack in Manchester last night.

5) Broadband update

After some years of lobbying from NPC, and with support from cross party representatives at City, County and Parliamentary level, BT Openreach finally upgraded the broadband cabinet located at The Grange entrance on the B3046 with high-speed 'Fibre to the Cabinet' technology earlier this year

This means that all houses served by this cabinet now have access to genuine high-speed broadband, even those who have previously struggled to get any usable service. Whilst not the very fastest fibre home broadband available in some cities, the speed is comparable to the service enjoyed by many town and city dwellers.

Properties close to the cabinet report download speeds in excess of 30 megabits per second (Mbps).

Further afield, New House Farm Cottages report a very usable 10 Mbps or above where previously little viable speed was available.

However the upgrade and the resultant potential speeds available, has exposed the existence of poor copper wire connections to a few unlucky properties. Most now report that, by dint of persistent complaints to BT Openreach, they have largely solved these problems. There are no excuses now for poor speeds, so please do complain vigorously to your provider and demand action if you do not get speeds similar to those enjoyed by your near neighbours.

Technology advances apace, and city dwellers already clearly benefit from increases in these type of services. We will keep a watching brief and act early if we see the gap between city and rural services widening unreasonably again.

6) Footpaths

The Moundsmere Estate has refused access for a footpath along the B3046. However, Lucy Williams noted that we now have a permissive path on The Grange Estate (details of which were circulated by NPC on 11 May 2017). The village now has access during the summer months. JM reminded the meeting that the path will be closed during the shooting season.

7) B3046

NPC and in particular YW have lobbied WCC to reduce speed limits but unfortunately we are still awaiting answers and progress. NPC has considered putting up our own speed limit signs, which could be bought from HCC.

NPC needs to explore and request the re-designation of roads and whether it is possible to mitigate the effect of HGVs causing traffic problems and damage to roads, signs and markings. It emerged at the AM that it is essential for heavy goods vehicles to be equipped with the HGV specific satellite navigation systems, which would help them avoid narrow country roads.

Peter Lamb, picking up a point made by YW, said that a road sign was missing from the road leading from Old Alresford towards Swarraton. The road sign used to direct traffic to Preston Candover by a route which avoided Swarraton, Northington and the Candovers. JP will look into the matter and ask for the sign to be reinstated.

8) Village upkeep

AD reported a great response by villagers to his request for help in cleaning up the Parish's roads and verges. NPC will continue its village clean up, despite the use of a Lengthsman. AD will supervise the work of Joe Noades, our Lengthsman, which will include: clearing drainage ditches (grips), road sign cleaning and bus shelter repairs. If anyone knows of any tasks which might appropriately be carried out by Joe, are asked to get in touch with AD.

Peter Lamb said that road markings put down by organisers of cycle races through our parish are still visible several weeks after the races. JP said that the MacMillan charity was responsible for the green marks and parishioners elsewhere have raised the issue. JP advised NPC to contact Macmillan directly to resolve the matter.

9) SSE

YW said she had picked up the reins from Fleur. She had identified the key people and been in touch with SSE about our resilience centre. As mentioned by JM earlier, serious damage had been done to the Millennium Path during the temporary installation of generators. NPC had received complaints. YW had put the matter to SSE, who had acknowledged the problem. They had undertaken to repair the path and a site meeting had already taken place.

10) Grange Festival

The subject has been covered in the Chairman's report (III).

11) Clerk's report

AR presented the final financial figures for the NPC for the year 2016/17. The small overspend in comparison to the previous year was due to a missed clerk's salary in 2015/16 and the donation towards the upkeep of the war memorial. AR reminded the meeting that the war memorial contribution was a one off donation (c.f. Paragraph 8 of the November 2016 minutes). NPC has not received any non-budgeted incomes during 2016/17. NPC will discuss the possibility of an increase in the precept for 2018 at its next regular meeting.

Paul Clarke, a qualified accountant, had carried out the internal audit.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Peter Lamb and seconded by Michael Broderick.

12) Any other business

Peter Lamb drew the meeting's attention to a ceremony at the war memorial on the 3rd Sunday in July 2017. As an aside, Peter Lamb noted that the British Legion intends to use the memorial at Preston Candover for its Remembrance Day ceremonies..

The meeting ended at 8.35 p.m.

AR

25/05/2017