

MINUTES OF NORTHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

Swarraton and Northington Village Hall

7.30pm on Tuesday, 15th of May 2018

Present: John Mitchell (JM, Chairman)
 Adam Dyne (AD)
 Yvonne White (YW)
 Melissa Jennings (JM)
 Alexandra Risebury (AR, Clerk)
 17 residents

Apologies: Margot Power (MP, Councillor)
 Simon Walker (SW)
 Mr and Mrs La Fontaine-Jackson
 Lisa Griffith (LG, Councillor)
 Elaine Capp (EC)

The Chairman welcomed all present.

1) Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of last year's annual meeting held on the 23rd of May 2017 were circulated to all present. NPC has no further update on the Farnborough TAG4 or GPPS. SSE have repaired the Millenium Path.

Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Ben Wright and seconded by Nancy Brooke. The Chairman signed them.

2) Matters arising

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

b) There have been no changes since last year's annual meeting in the make up of Northington Parish Council. However, in May 2019 the whole council comes up for re-election. JM encouraged and invited residents, especially those who have settled in the parish in the last few years, to consider becoming Parish Councillors, not least because it is healthy to have fresh faces and ideas.

3. Chairman's report

I) GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

As possessors of personal data, such as home addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers, NPC is subject to the Act, which comes in force on 25th May 2018.

The Parish Council, the Village Hall Committee and the Parochial Church Council are subject to the rigours of the Act. Peter Lamb suggested that Philippa Pellereau and John Mitchell should meet to discuss what should be done. JM agreed to prepare a synopsis of a document offered by the Association of Local Councils, which will be sent to all residents whose email addresses NPC holds. The main text will appear on the Parish website, as will the synopsis.

Having taken its cue from professional operations, which simply require everyone to be aware of their rights under GDPR, NPC considers that by circulating the synopsis, NPC will comply with the requirements of the Act. The curator of the data is the Council's Clerk and we are grateful to Alexandra Risebury for taking on this formal role. AR will, however, work in tandem with a Councillor, in this case Melissa Jennings, who will be happy to answer any questions that may come up.

JM asked the residents, if anyone had any concerns over this matter and no one disagreed.

II) PLANNING

JM said that the annual meeting wasn't the place to catalogue every planning application received but he wanted to inform residents about the Council's formal comments on applications.

In spring 2017, one application had caused some discussion after which JM sought a meeting with the Head of the Planning Department to seek clarification on the way that NPC comments on planning applications are handled. It emerged that NPC is able to express their views on a wide range of aspects, whereas NPC hitherto had been under

the impression that aesthetic matters were beyond its competence. This is not the case. Although NPC's views on purpose, shape, size and colour may not figure largely in the discussions of the planners, they do wish to hear them. On the evidence of two recent applications, NPC's voice has been heard.

III) GRANGE FESTIVAL

The Grange Festival is about to start its second season. NPC is glad to see that the Festival is continuing with its 'Open Door' policy. On the 29th April 2018 The Festival held an Open Day. JM expressed thanks to the Village Hall team who struggled in rain and a bitter wind to serve tea and cakes. The trader who sold icecreams deserved everyone's sympathy.

The Festival is pressing on with its declared intention to organise educational visits. A recent email showed plans to let young people see an opera (The Barber of Seville) in the making. JM is looking forward to the dress rehearsals in June.

IV) B3046

Cars are continuing to speed and NPC is struggling to persuade Hampshire County Council to reduce speed limits.

More in desperation than hope, NPC has looked at installing flashing speed signs on the B3046. This would be at our cost and they are allowed for only 12 weeks at a stretch because it seems that familiarity breeds contempt for flashing lights too. The significant cost means that we would have to find another two Parishes with whom we can share the facility.

JM had canvassed the idea of flashing warnings with some members of the Parish and received a mixed response. The idea will be explored further in the evening and emerging comments taken into consideration.

V) POLICING and NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Elaine Capp continues to look after our interests. JM thanked Elaine on behalf of NPC for all she does for us.

VI) THE COUNCIL

JM thanked his fellow councillors on behalf of everyone for their work for the Parish.

Simon is currently away a lot but he keeps himself informed about NPC's discussions and is particularly savvy about our website. He also keeps a watching brief on footpath issues.

Melissa has kindly agreed to help with the Council's responsibility for safeguarding our data and its use and also keeps SSE up to the mark on coping in a crisis (resilience).

Yvonne keeps more than an eye on B3046 matters. Apart from dealing with HGV problems, she has been very active in pursuing WCC's Highways Department in the matter of potholes. Since the beginning of the year this has been a considerable task. We have toured the Parish twice with the official who decides which holes may be filled, most recently on 27th April 2018. More of this later.

Adam's organisational skills and charisma are well known and his work on our behalf is recognised when it comes to getting us out with our black sacks for village clean-ups. Adam also supervises the work of our Lengthsman, Joe Noades.

Alex keeps us informed about things that need to be done and the parameters within which we can do them. She also keeps our accounts in order. It's a big job and we are all clear that the Council would not function as well as it does without Alex's hard work.

JM's final note is to extend the Council's thanks to the owner and management of the Woolpack Inn, who allow us to use their private dining room for our meetings. This makes a huge difference on a cold winter's evening.

4. Lengthsman

AD informed residents that NPC has a Lengthsman (Joe Noades) in place, whose services are shared with Preston Candover. Preston Candover holds the budget for the Lengthsman scheme.

The village spring clean-up attracts an increasing number of volunteers and will continue over the next years. AD thanked everyone who took part in this year's event.

AD urged everyone to tell him or AR if anything needs cleaning/clearing. AD also read out a list of jobs allocated to the Lengthsman, which AD needs to sign before the Lengthsman gets paid.

5. B3046

YW reported that she has seen several changes to the B3046 over the last 20(+) years. She and JM toured the Parish with Hampshire Highways in September 2017, pointing out in great detail all the damaged roads, especially along the B3046. YV reported sadly that Hampshire Highways didn't appear too concerned and the criteria for repair seem more than challenging than NPC had imagined. For example if a pothole intrudes on the road's surface for less than 30cm, it does not qualify for repair.

Some potholes, which were marked by Hampshire Highways during the September visit have been repaired. However, following recent harsh winter weather, more potholes appeared. YW arranged for another visit and with JM met Hampshire Highways in April

2018 for a tour of the Parish. We were promised road repairs but so far, there has been little action. However, just today, a large section of damaged road near the Grange's east entrance in Swarraton has been repaired.

YW encouraged residents to report potholes on Hampshire County's website.

Peter Lamb was highly critical of the quality of road repairs. YW explained that HCC had changed contractors who are while saving the Council money appear to be working to a lower standard. Peter Lamb suggested praying in aid the Road Traffic Act to create pressure.

The signpost redirecting traffic off B3046 towards Basingstoke along Spiers Lane went missing some time ago. AR followed this up and was told by the Highways Department that it will not be replaced.

Referring back to his report, JM said that he wanted to hear the thoughts of residents about the investment and instalment of flashing speed signs. The cost would be approximately £3000-4000. After some discussion, it was decided not to pursue the idea of flashing lights.

AR said that in a recent report, Jackie Porter had noted that light-up signs do warn drivers but actual records show that many drivers continue to exceed the speed limit. In contrast, Itchen Stoke's Speedwatch programme has resulted in nearly 500 drivers receiving warnings. Peter Swithinbank said that he also had noticed the Speedwatch programme and suggested that NPC should investigate. Mark Baring suggested that NPC should contact David Cook, the Chairman of Itchen Stoke Council, to find out more.

6. Road maintenance, potholes, grit bins, fly-tipping

AR reminded everyone of Hampshire County Council's website for reporting potholes, empty grit bins or fly-tipping within our Parish.

Residents can play their part and not leave it entirely to NPC. However, if residents do encounter any difficulties in reporting, AR is more than happy to help and can be reached on her phone or email.

Francesca Baring reported her recent struggle to report fly-tipping. No action was taken by HCC. Francesca said that she had reported via website, sent emails and telephoned but without success. She said she would try again but if she still has no success, she will contact AR for further support.

There was a brief discussion of where HCC's responsibilities ended and where those of a property owner began

7. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The subject had been covered in the Chairman's report (I).

8. Planning Applications

At the beginning of 2018, the owners of the Sawmill in Totford appealed against an adverse decision on their request for their planning permission. On 3 April 2018, the Planning Inspectorate had decided to dismiss the appeal and planning permission for the replacement of existing lawful commercial (B2) buildings had been refused.

9. SSE

MJ and YW attended a meeting with SSE to discuss the potential for NPC's resilience centre.

Several options have been investigated and considered and MJ provided a detailed report, which can be found on the Parish website.

The conclusion was to build a local support network because most residents do not have an emergency generator, it was necessary to look out for each other and support each other.

MJ also reminded residents that there would be an interruption of electricity supply on the morning of 13 June 2018 to allow SSE to carry out maintenance on their high voltage lines. SSE has notified residents via post or hand delivered flyer of this disruption to their electricity supply.

10. Clerk's report

AR presented the final financial figures for the NPC for the year 2017/18. NPC's precept for 2018/19 remained unchanged as the figures showed that the precept has been sufficient with an underspend of £782.54

Taking into account the current budget surplus, AR said that NPC is looking for ideas from residents on how to spend the money. Suggestions so far received, included improvements to the BBQ area at the Village Hall, a play area or external lighting for the Village Hall. NPC will consider the options and make a recommendation.

Peter Lamb suggested using the money for traffic signs within the Parish. JM noted that missing signs are reported to HCC because, for a host of legal reasons, only the Highways Department may replace signs.

The church upkeep grant will remain at the same level as in 2017. NPC noted that it is not responsible for the upkeep of the war memorial.

SAAA (Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd) has appointed PKF Littlejohn as our new external auditors for the next 5 years from 2017/18. The cost for the external audit appears almost 4 times higher than the previous external auditor. Paul Clarke has agreed to perform the internal audit report as he did last year. NPC will apply for a certificate of exemption as our budget is less than £25,000 per annum and therefore the cost of the external audit should be less than stipulated.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Rhona Hatchley and seconded by Michael Broderick.

11. Any other business

a) Phone box: because the phone box outside Northington Farmhouse no longer works, the meeting agreed to ask BT to remove it.

b) The meeting noted that the post-box at Northington Farmhouse is occasionally inaccessible due to flooding. Its move to the Village Hall would be more convenient. NPC will investigate.

b) NPC received a provocatively worded invitation apparently from the Leader of WCC to a meeting to explore possibilities for affordable housing in rural areas. JM had drawn Councillor Kim Gottlieb's attention to the wording of the invitation and called WCC to ask for more information. The upshot is that Steve Lincoln of the Planning Section will come to a meeting with NPC to set out his thoughts on affordable housing in rural locations.. No date has been set for the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.37p.m.

AR

27/05/2018