

# HARRINGWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

## NOTES OF THE OPEN ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.00 pm ON THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup> MAY 2017

Present : Cllr S. McLean (chairman)  
Cllr S. Milton (deputy chairman)  
Cllr L. Boon  
Cllr S. Chambers  
Cllr G. Dolman  
Cllr K. Dove  
Cllr A. White  
Brian Chambers (Clerk)

Apologies: Cllr Heather Smith  
Cllr Helen Harrison

Also in attendance: 10 members of the public

### **1. Introduction**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:00 pm by outlining the purpose of the meeting. He explained the absence of the County and District Councillors and that the written police submission would explain the absence of their representative. Cllr McLean thanked those present for their attendance.

### **2. County Council Report from Cllr Heather Smith**

Cllr Smith had tendered her apologies for the meeting and had been unable to submit a written report. The Clerk was asked to communicate any matters arising pertinent to the County Council to Cllr Smith.

### **3. District Council Report from Cllr Helen Harrison**

Cllr Harrison was not in attendance and had not submitted a written report. The Clerk was asked to communicate any matters arising pertinent to the District Council to Cllr Harrison.

### **4. Police Report.**

The Clerk read a letter received on the 8<sup>th</sup> May from Inspector Daryl Lyon titled "Update for Parish Councils of Wellingborough and East Northants April 2017". The letter outlined what the Parish Council could expect from the Neighbourhood Inspectors team;

- As from 1<sup>st</sup> May they would not routinely attend all Parish Council meetings.
- Where an issue with crime was identified which they felt would benefit from discussion they would contact the Parish Council
- They would attend parish councils as and when the Parish Council had specific issues to discuss.
- No crime statistics would be provided for Parish Council meetings for the time being but it was hoped these could be reintroduced later in the year.
- Various social media means of engagement were described.

The Neighbourhood policing policy focuses resources towards areas where criminal activity has been reported. It is therefore essential that any criminal activity or police intelligence is reported so that Harringworth gets the necessary resources allocated to any policing issues we identify.

## **5. Questions from the public regarding County, District or Parish matters**

In the absence of a County Council or District Council report, the Chairman read his annual report that is usually presented in the Annual Parish Council meeting.

### **Harringworth Parish Council** **Chairman's Report Thursday 11th May 2017**

I would like to provide a summary of many of our activities over my last 12 months where I have been honoured to serve once again as Chairman of Harringworth Parish Council.

With the exception of one major planning application which failed to obtain approval most others have been relatively straightforward. There has also been the usual level of conservation area requests for the pruning or removal of trees. During the year the possible creation of a Neighbourhood Plan was explored with Cllr White attending a workshop to learn more. After discussing his post workshop report and identifying the benefits against the amount of work involved it was agreed that, whilst maintaining a watching brief, we would not proceed at present.

The 2017 grass cutting contract for the village has been kept with CGD Contractors for a further year at their 2016 prices. In 2016 they have provided a reliable service with flexibility that enables us to pull forward cuts if necessary for weddings, funerals or other major village functions. Our maintenance responsibilities for the churchyard and burial ground included a further annual inspection of the headstones from a Health and Safety view and also the initiation of a repair to the boundary fence of the burial ground.

Following issues raised after the sudden collapse at home of a villager who lives alone, Cllr Chambers obtained a quantity of "Message in a Bottle" containers from the local Lions. These have been distributed to many villagers living alone enabling them to record important contact details of relatives, doctors etc.

Working with the Northants County Council Highways Dept. nominated contractor Kier WSP has proved challenging over the last year with the biggest issue often being the delay in work being carried out. Eventually in February after a wait of nearly 9 months the excessively numerous and misaligned plastic bollards alongside the pumping station site on Seaton Road were replaced. Sadly they were demolished by a vehicle or

vehicles unknown only a matter of days later. Their further reinstatement is still awaited. Potholes when reported do get filled but not always quickly although I am pleased to say that a significant number of pieces of patching work were completed this year on the hill up to Laxton.

After much unresolved correspondence with both Rutland and NCC Highways Dept., the Environment Agency and the landowner we decided to provide Parish Council support to clear the overgrown trees, bushes and hedges along the viaduct side of the Seaton Road. On a very wet and windy February morning a large team of volunteers supported a local hedging contractor to dramatically reduce the overgrown vegetation and improve the vehicle visibility across this bend, dramatically reducing the major road safety issue that existed. The success of this initiative was demonstrated by the significant number of unprompted comments of support received from villagers.

To help support a reduction in dog fouling in the village, a new litter bin has been installed at the top of the lane between Lindisfarne and Brook House and a “dog poo” bin is now in place at the footpath entrance on Gretton Road near the viaduct. We hope that all dog owners will make use of these facilities.

Although works were due to finish in March 17, maintenance activities on the viaduct are still continuing with Listed Building planning permission is being sought now for some of this work. During the year there have been brief road closures and traffic light systems put in place to facilitate the work but communications with Sean Trickett the project manager at AMCO are good. Unfortunately Sean’s attempt to arrange for a Sunday for villagers to walk over the viaduct in organised groups was turned down by his ultimate bosses at Network Rail. The final major piece of bridge pier strengthening work is still years away.

Unlike previous years, Police Community Support Officers have become very infrequent attendees at this year’s meetings and a recent email from Inspector Daryl Lyon from Wellingborough and East Northants Police would suggest that this is likely to stay the case following further internal reorganisation and reprioritisation.

With rising costs and a need to provision for street lighting being totally replaced with LED fittings in the future, it was decided to increase the

precept for 2017 by 3% which rounded down slightly gives us an annual precept up from £5835 to £6000.

After long delays in installing fibre throughout the village, Gigaclear went live with its broadband fibre to the door offering at the turn of the year. Villagers now have a superfast choice between Gigaclear and BT with their fibre to the cabinet.

The Harringworth BT phone box now houses our new defibrillator which was funded by money from the Parish Council, the Appeals Fund and our County and District Councillors' Member empowerment funds. The Red Cross subsidised scheme had come to an end but the £1517.50 plus VAT special price we paid was still attractive. This recent purchase was supported by a CPR training session held last Saturday in the village hall.

After many months of extended closure, villagers were delighted to see the White Swan reopen in the autumn. Unfortunately a promising start with good and original food was not to last and the 20 year lease holder was forced to seek new management in the form of Rob and Sarah earlier this year. They now live in and the pub is open for food and drink 5 days a week closing on Monday and Tuesday. The intention is to extend this to 7 day opening and start to offer accommodation again. I wish them well in rebuilding this important part of our Harringworth community.

Finally I must thank all my fellow councillors and our Clerk Brian for their support throughout the year and also our District Cllr. Helen Harrison and County Cllr. Heather Smith for their financial assistance through their empowerment funds. Thank you.

Simon Mclean

11<sup>th</sup> May 2017

There then followed a series of questions from members of the public.

In response to a question asking what a neighbourhood plan is (mentioned in the Chairman's report), The Chairman and Cllr White gave a brief explanation of such plans and the Parish Councils current policy on creating one.

The status of the pic-nic area on Gretton Road was raised. The Chairman described the problems being experienced with continual fly-tipping at this spot and that a request to close the lay-by had been agreed with the highways authority but not implemented as the Parish Council were being asked to fund the closure. There was strong sentiment that a public amenity was being lost due to the behaviour of a minority of people. The Clerk pointed out that the landowner had allowed the hedge to grow to form a security screen. The use of video surveillance was raised and the Clerk pointed out that there was no powered street furniture in the locality on which to mount such equipment. The Clerk will ask the relevant authority about the installation of cameras. It was agreed that there was no easy solution to this problem and there were none proposed by members of the public in response to a request from the Chairman. In addition to the actions taken by the Clerk, members of the public were invited to submit proposals for future consideration.

Members of the public warmly welcomed the hedge clearance on Seaton Road but it had exposed the potholes on either side of the carriageway along the section of road under the viaduct. The Clerk explained that this had already been raised with Rutland County Council who were dealing with the matter. The resolution had been delayed and the Northern boundary of the highway faces on to the SSI field and Rutland County Council need to agree with the landowners what materials can be used to repair the edge of the road.

Following the installation of the Gigaclear network, the reinstatement had not been covered with golden gravel to match the rest of the footpath. The Clerk explained that the highways authority no longer make it a requirement of utilities and sub contractors to use this medium as the authority do not use it themselves. The levels of dust on the footpath and in the gutter resulting from these works have never been cleared and the Clerk was asked to contact the Highways authority and request this be carried out.

The clearance of weeds from the edges of the footpaths was discussed and the current clearance by the Highways authority explained. It was felt that a group of volunteers could carry out this activity more frequently to enhance the appearance of the village.

The parking of vehicles on grass verges throughout the village was another subject that raised strong feeling among those present. The Chairman explained that this was often a consequence of increased vehicle ownership at properties without the necessary parking space. A number of specific examples were given where vehicles are parked on the verge despite the properties having space available. No solutions were proposed but this would be the subject of on-going discussion for the Parish Council.

The impact of long-term building works on the immediate environment was raised. The Clerk is to raise the matter with the planning and highway authority to see what steps can be taken to minimise the impact of these works on neighbours.

There being no further questions, the meeting closed at 7:50 pm