

HARRINGWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

NOTES OF THE OPEN ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.00 pm ON THURSDAY 10th MAY 2018

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)
Cllr Heather Smith

Apologies: Cllr Helen Harrison

Also in attendance: 1 member of the public

1. Introduction

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:05 pm by outlining the purpose of the meeting. Cllr McLean thanked those present for their attendance and invited Cllr Heather Smith to present her report.

2. County Council Report from Cllr Heather Smith

The following report was given by Cllr. Heather Smith;

The past 12 months have yet again been hugely challenging for the County Council. Continuing reductions in funding whilst at the same time having to cope with increasing demands for social care services finally came to a head early in 2018 when it became apparent that the Council could not balance its budget for 2017/18 without using all reserves and/or selling and leasing back the replacement HQ building Angel Square. The sale has now taken place and the receipt far exceeded the build costs but this is only a sticking plaster so Government has decided that Northamptonshire should move from 8 councils to just 2 new unitary councils. The aim is for that to happen for May 2020 with new elections taking place that year. It currently looks as though East Northants Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough will form 1 new unitary council taking on responsibility for all the Countywide services. This means all existing District, Borough and County councils will disappear. There are stiff spending controls in place for the County Council until this happens so there will be no empowering councillor fund available from the County Council during this financial year. There are implications locally of reduced spending and in particular grants to support the Call Connect bus service are being withdrawn at the end of July. I am currently working with the Thrapston and area County Councillor to try to find other funding solutions. Some councils have already made provision to give support but this does not apply to all and some villages do not have a parish council so have no means of funding a supported bus service. I will be doing my best to try to achieve the continuation of some level of rural bus service for this area. In Harringworth currently there are no registered users of the service so the plan is to exclude Harringworth from the list of villages having access. The County Council is also consulting on a 3 tonne weight limit for Oundle North bridge as an inspection has shown that it cannot continue to carry weights in excess of that limit without repairs estimated at £750,000. Needless to say there is no

provision within the budget for expenditure at that level but repairs will have to be undertaken at some point.

The past winter has been particularly damaging for the counties roads but teams are busy carrying out repairs. Unfortunately this does mean a number of road closures to enable works to be carried out safely.

I am on the Tresham garden village board so am taking an active interest in the implications for the A43 and A427.

Cllr Heather Smith

Oundle Division councillor

10 May 2018

Cllr. Smith answered a series of questions raised by Parish Councillors.

The Secretary of State had refused permission for Northants County Council to increase levels of Council Tax to enable the continued delivery of existing services.

The emergency services available at the Corby Urgent Care Centre is a matter for the NHS and not a Local Government issue.

Cllr. Smith agreed with the views expressed regarding the state of the highways and the number of potholes not being repaired, she went on to explain that as 60% - 70% of Council Tax is now spent on Social Care it doesn't leave sufficient funding available to deal with all the highways issues.

Cllr. Heather Smith is to report back to the Parish Council on any proposed changes to the gritting services delivered to Harringworth as a result of the recent budget cuts.

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.

In the absence of any representative from the Police Authority, the Clerk provided details of crime figures in East Northants from the Northamptonshire Police web site.

Recent advice published on the Neighbourhood Alert social media channel had been focussed on the recent spell of hot weather. Pet owners were asked not to leave animals inside unattended vehicles and residents were recommended not to leave windows open when their property is unattended.

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

The Parish Council was asked why the Open meeting had not been more widely publicised using social media.

The Chairman reported that the Council had considered this issue at its regular meeting in March and decided that as there were no significant matters of interest that would warrant a guest speaker and there were no contentious items proposed for the agenda, the meeting would therefore be advertised on the Parish Council notice Board and on the Parish Council pages of the village web site.

It was observed that the Parish Council had advertised the 2016 meeting using social media including a group email distribution in addition to the notice board and web site but no public attendance was recorded. The meeting had been attended by County and District Councillors in addition to a Police representative and a guest speaker from AMCO Rail. The 2017 meeting had been advertised in the same way but with the addition of a leaflet drop to all residents, this had resulted in 10 members of the public attending, unfortunately to the embarrassment of Council members none of the guest speakers invited were able to attend.

The Parish Council will review the publicity for the 2019 meetings at its regular meeting in March 2019.

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