

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF WHILTON

Held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 10 April 2013 at 7pm

13 Parishioners attended, with Mr Peter Wingrave, Chairman of the Parish Council in the chair and Mrs Erica Fothergill, Clerk to the Parish Council, as secretary. Mr Wingrave welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for taking the time to attend.

Apologies were received from Cllr Nora Swinford, District Councillors Kevin Perry, Ian Duly, Eddie Reeves and PCSO Sarah Gray.

1. The minutes of the 2012 Annual Parish meeting held on 11 April 2012 were approved.
2. Matters Arising – none.
3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Peter Wingrave, reported that substantial progress had been achieved with regard to protracted drainage issues on Brington Lane. A total of eight lights have now been upgraded to low energy lamps and the remainder will be dealt with over the next couple of years in order to minimise the impact on our precept.

He thanked the Clerk for her patient direction in the conduct of affairs enabling Council to confidently address issues and conclude outcomes, within legal parameters. This structured approach combined with the considerable experience and commitment of Councillors provides, a solid base going forward.

The impact of the Localism Act on council business, the apparent inability of councils to halt the progress of wind turbines and the noise levels emanating from Whilton Mill are examples of what council is dealing with behind the scenes and in some of these areas the Parish Council will be seeking assistance and guidance from other members of the village community. This we believe to be entirely sensible to optimise our responses in such important matters.

Lastly, the Chairman thanked representatives of the many groups in the village for their hard work in making Whilton such a community-spirited village to live in.

4. County Councillor's Report

Councillor Osborne thanked the Council and residents of Whilton for inviting him to attend their meeting and for their past support. Councillor Osborne said that he was pleased to represent Whilton as he was always made to feel very welcome. Highlights of his report include:

- Elections are being held in a number of electoral divisions in the county on 2 May 2013 due to boundary changes, including Long Buckby;
- He remains a member of the Development Control Committee at the Northamptonshire County Council;
- NCC switches lights off at night to save money but lights in Kettering and Corby are not switched off at night so NCC and villages under its jurisdiction, subsidise it;
- Government cutbacks resulted in further job losses at the County Council;
- Village green – he supports the registration of the village green when the matter is discussed at meetings and sees no reason why it should not be approved during the coming year;
- In general, parish councils are happier with the quality of road patching work;

5. District Councillors' Report

None of the three district councillors were able to attend the meeting but submitted a comprehensive report, but Cllr Osborne kindly gave the meeting a brief overview of activities.

Finance

- 92% of Icelandic Investments have been recovered;
- The Council entered a new partnership to ensure the future stability of the Leisure Centre;
- Income from new Homes for Rent at Middlemore; the new crematorium at Rugby in partnership with Rugby Borough Council and securing Job Centre Plus as a tenant within the Council's Lodge Road premises.

Town Centre Regeneration: (Still subject to approval of planning applications)

- A new shopping centre, cinema and state-of-the-art library as part of a development at 'Mulberry Place' ;
- Alongside a new cinema, restaurants and cafes, a new modern library will also be built on the Chapel Lane car park site, 50% bigger than the existing library and will include a small outside amphitheatre, registry office and ceremonies room;
- The retail-led scheme will be serviced by a new 'undercroft' car park providing around 250 spaces;
- Development to the west of the town centre stretching from Waterloo to Chaucer Way, will contain a new supermarket, petrol station and bulky goods retail units;
- The University Technical College for New Technologies in Daventry is planned to open by 2013 and will cater for up to 600 pupils. University Technical Colleges (UTCs) are a relatively new concept in education and are designed to offer 14-19 year-olds an opportunity to take full time, technically oriented courses.

Welfare reform

- Housing Benefit (including the so-called 'bedroom tax' or 'spare room subsidy');
- Council Tax Benefit changing to Council Tax Support Scheme - Abolished and replaced with a Local Council Tax Support Scheme Council tax support (CTS);
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) - Replaced by Personal Independence Payment (PIP);
- Benefit Cap - £500 p/wk for couples and lone parents £350 p/wk for single adults;
- Introduction of Universal Credit - Consolidates all benefits households receive into a single benefit paid monthly.

6. Report from Brington and Whilton Pre-School

The Early Years Manager, Jenny Holman, reported that the Pre-school thrived during the past year and that numbers of children have been steady and averaged at around 12 children per morning. Main items from Jenny's report are:

- Most children now start with them at two years which enables them to build up good relationships with the children and their families;
- Government has again amended the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum last September and they are working through the changes;
- During this year, despite the weather, they have visited Roughmoor Spinney more and the children enjoyed planting snowdrops in the autumn. They hope to arrange a work day shortly at the spinney to set up a digging area for the children to plant and grow vegetables.
- Christmas Concert, visit to the farm, forest school, decorating the hall for the Jubilee celebrations and celebrating the Olympics were other activities they were involved in. Overall yet another successful year for the pre-school.

7. Police Report

PCSO Sarah Gray was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting.

8. Report from Whilton's Spinney Management Committee

9. We were very sorry to hear that the chairman of the Spinney Committee, Derek Brown, was unable to attend due to poor health, and his report was presented by Anthea Hiscock.

- Due to the inclement weather, work in the Spinney during the past year was minimal. The granite chippings laid in March 2012 to improve the footpaths have stood up well to the extremely wet weather.
- The Spinney applied for and received a grant of £300 from Mr Steve Osborne, Northamptonshire County Councillor, ring-fenced for the purchase of granite chippings to continue with upgrading footpaths in the spinney. The Parish Council's contribution of £200 will pay for the insurance cover;
- A Working Party Sub-Committee was formed to oversee and deal with any work necessary between the main Working Parties who is also responsible for Health and Safety checks and recording in the book provided.

10. Report from Whilton's Neighbourhood Watch

David Stoddart reported that nothing major had happened since his appointment about 4 months ago, other than theft of oil from a property on the Green and causing damage to the tank.

11. Report from Whilton's Gardeners' Association

The Chairman, Roy Haynes, reported that their membership was up on last year and that they now had 33 members, compared with 31 in 2012. He also reported that:

- They've managed to hold subscriptions at £12 per person and non-members were welcome to attend at a fee of £3 per meeting;
- Meetings are held bi-monthly, on the first Wednesday of the month, starting with the AGM in February;
- Last year an average of 20 people attended meetings.

This year's programme includes 3 meetings with guest speakers, an open gardens evening in Whilton, a visit to the garden of a member who lives at Nobottle and a Members' Christmas Social with supper and quiz. He closed by saying that new members were always welcome.

12. Report from Whilton's Village Hall Management Group

Village Hall Chairman, Maurice Clements, presented his report saying that, although the bulk of their income was derived from the Brington & Whilton Pre-School and the 200 Club, most village organisations have also supported the village hall during the year. Two DDC elections, and private bookings also helped to boost their income.

Due to the weather, the village hall and church had been the focal point of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations which was well supported. Maurice thanked everyone who had worked on the commemorative book and all copies have now been sold.

Lastly Maurice thanked Derek, Shirley and the collecting team for their hard work with regard to the 200 Club, Mary Kane for doing the village hall bookings and everyone else who played a part in the smooth running of the village hall.

13. Report from Whilton's Parochial Church Council – Janet Bowers

The Church Warden, Janet Bowers, was unable to attend and submitted a report, read by her husband Ken Bowers, in which she reported that, except for the 1st Sunday of each month when it was a Benefice Sung Eucharist service rotating around the 6 parishes of the Spencer Benefice,

services had been held every Sunday at St Andrew's.

Other matters reported on include:

- A Quinquennial inspection by the architect resulted in some work to be done to the fabric and a faculty was applied for from the Diocese and work is due to commence shortly. In line with the requirements of the Quinquennial, the electrical supply of the church was also inspected;
- The annual maintenance was done on the organ and fire extinguishers and the PCC thanked the parish council for covering the cost of the 4-yearly maintenance of the church clock;
- One baptism and one memorial service have taken place and a pet blessing was held in July;
- In June due to the heavy rain the Queens Diamond Jubilee tea party was held in the church, together with photographic displays of the villagers during past years;
- A new oak post replaced the rotten one on the main gate. This work was undertaken by Roy Haynes and Ken Bowers. They also thanked Roy for keeping the churchyard mown and tidy;
- The bellringers continue to practise on Monday evenings and now have 5 under the age of 11yrs and at varying stages of ringing and 5 adults and as well as two regulars from Fawsley and one from Harlestone. The bells also rang out in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee and the opening of the Olympics;
- Unfortunately local teenagers and their friends who live outside the village, have been causing trouble at the church by burning notices from the porch notice board, leaving cigarette and crisp bags in the porch, damaging the west window with snow balls and graffiti on the path and the porch tiles.

14. Report from Whilton's Local History Society – Anthea Hiscock

Anthea reported that the Local History Society continues to meet every two months on a Thursday evening and that meetings over the last 12 months, were once again based on the history of Whilton and the local area, as detailed below:

- At this time last year, preparations were being made for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The May meeting was entitled "Down memory lane", and viewing photos taken during this reign;
- July saw a record attendance to hear guest speaker, Barry Smith, on "Ridge and Furrow".
- September's meeting centred around the history of South View;
- November marked "The Art of Whilton", providing an opportunity to see older art work depicting Whilton as well as art produced by a variety of people who have lived, and still live, in Whilton. The evening proved to be a celebration of place and talent.
- January's meeting was postponed because of the snow and ice;
- A small group met in March for "1656, one document's story", following one elusive document, which takes the history of one Whilton house back to the time of Mary Tudor, and also led forward to the time of the Gammage twin sisters who spent most of their lives here from 1883 to 1976.

The Society's next meeting has had to be changed, because it clashed with the May election. The next meeting will therefore be held on 23rd May, when the subject will be an introduction to the Brook Project, which will also be involving Whilton history. They also have another speaker booked for 28th November, who will talk about the restoring of Canons Ashby's garden.

15. Report from Whilton's Allotments Group – None received.

16. Report from the Editors of Whilton's Newsletter – Anthea Hiscock

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting another four issues of the Newsletter were published. The Newsletter is financed by the Parish Council, and is seen as an important contribution of the Parish Council towards maintaining a parish community. Highlights are summarised as follows:

- There has been a growing number of contributors, across the age range;
- They are looking for another volunteer to join their team as Teresa Leadbetter has retired;

- Council approved a maximum budget of £512 for 2013/14, i.e. £128 per quarterly newsletter which was the cost of printing the largest Newsletter in 2012. As editors and deliverers give freely of their time and don't charge for mileage or telephone calls, printing is the only expense incurred.
- Newsletters are also available on the website, thanks to Gerry Heeley;
- Newsletter advertising – flyers, delivered with the newsletter, are for charged at £10 each. Unfortunately this facility is not used often enough.

17. Whilton Parochial Charities - Keith Hiscock

Only one application for a grant has been made and approved despite increasing financial difficulties. The rise in share prices has allowed the giving of one grant and the selling of £350 of shares to meet possible applications, while showing an overall gain in assets of £359 to £4719. This fund remains for anyone normally resident in the Parish Boundaries and residents are urged to mention the possibility of obtaining funds from this source to those who should benefit from the forethought of previous wealthier generous parishioners.

Ideas on how to achieve more applications from residents as well as actual applications are welcomed.

Residents, young and old, are reminded of the criteria, permanently displayed on the two village notice Boards, summarised below.

- The Trustees are prepared to give grants in sums usually not exceeding £300/person/annum.
- Written grant applications should be handed to the trustees and explaining during a meeting, in confidence, the need and difficulty in financially meeting it or, if preferred, an interview with one of the trustees which they would record;
- The need may be for a piece of equipment or experience that anyone with reasonable means could be expected to acquire e.g. a replacement mattress, TV licence, small house repair, musical instrument, evening class/skill giving course, playgroup fee, taxi fare to visit relative/friend in hospital, holiday break or significant school trip/DofE expedition that would fulfill potential. It could be help with fees for, or transport costs including insurance to further training.
- Eligibility for an older or disabled person is defined as living mainly on a basic state pension or benefit, for a family living on an income half the national average wage, and for young people in their own right in a situation where it would not be expected a parent would fund the expense required. The payment may be requested to avoid consequences of a loan or the incurring of further debt

Residents are reminded that the three Trustees to be approached are the community representative, Ann Gilbert at Langton Cottage, the Rector Reverend Sue Kipling at Brington Rectory and Keith Hiscock, as the Parish Council nominee, at Langton House and that every application will be treated in the utmost confidence.

18. Social Committee

The informal Social Committee is responsible for organising two regular events in the parish, when people can meet to talk, eat and share ideas and information. These are the afternoon gatherings called "Tuesday Chat" and the Social Lunches.

There are usually three Social Lunches a year, in the late autumn, in early spring and at Midsummer. These cooked meals are open to all, but need to be pre-booked. Information is available on the notice board, in the Newsletter and on the website.

The lunches have been taking place on Thursdays, but are now likely to be on a Tuesday. They thanked all who are involved, and invited newcomers to join them.

The Tuesday Chats are held monthly, except when there is a Social Lunch. These are relaxed gatherings from 2:30 to 4pm over a cup of tea and a choice of cakes. Again these meetings are open to all, and for this there is no need to pre-book. They closed by thanking all those who take their turn in preparing the tea and cakes.

The next Tuesday Chat will be next Tuesday, 16th April.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:55pm and thanked everybody for attending.