

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF WHILTON

Held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 11 April 2012 at 7pm

18 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 all to the meeting and thanked them for taking the time to attend the meeting.

Apologies were received from District Councillor Wendy Amos and PCSO Sarah Gray.

1. The minutes of the 2011 Annual Parish meeting held on 13 April 2011 were approved.
2. Mr Wingrave advised that, as the minutes were very long, it would be displayed on the website and noticeboard and parishioners are welcome to bring any issues arising from the minutes to the Council's attention and request for it to be placed on the next agenda.
3. Chairman's Report – Peter Wingrave

The Chairman reported that he took on the role in the middle of 2011 and that it has been a steep learning curve. Despite this, the council has managed to clear many long standing issues on the table, amongst others, acquisition of new village sign for the village green, liaising with NCC Highways on speed limits in the village and sorting out the drain on Brington Lane with the help of MGWSP.

He advised that the previous clerk left in January and he welcomed the new clerk and thanked her for her contribution so far in addressing the shortcomings identified in the internal audit.

Concern was expressed regarding the impact that the Localism Act and Neighbourhood planning will have on planning matters and said that they were keen to continue working with 'Daventry Villages Together' in an effort to stay abreast of the changes.

Lastly, the Chairman referred to the many groups in the village, working independently behind the scenes to make Whilton such a lovely village to live in and said that he was going to arrange a social coffee evening for all village groups shortly so that they could get to know each other better.

4. County Councillor's Report – Steve Osborne

Councillor Osborne said that he was pleased to represent Whilton and that he was always sure of a warm welcome when visiting the village. Highlights of his report include:

- He has joined the Development Control Committee at the Northamptonshire County Council;
- Introduction of reduced number of street lamps being switched on;
- Government cutbacks resulted in job losses at the County Council;
- Increase in children taken into care and the drive to place them into foster care
- People living longer adds an additional strain on the budget;
- Village green – NCC consulted a barrister who advised that they would lose the legal battle if they proceed with the case;
- In general, parish councils are happier with the quality of road patching work;
- Boundary Commission will consult with parish councils on the reduced number of councillors in Daventry area. One county councillor position will also go.
- The planning process will alter considerably and the general feeling is that developers will benefit more than residents and villages.

5. No report received from the District Councillor.

6. Report from Brington and Whilton Pre-School – Jenny Holman

The Early Years Manager 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 include:

- New staff were appointed during the year and had to undergo training.
- All staff members continue to undergo training to keep up to date with developments;
- They were granted six weeks free at Everdon Activities Centre's Forest School during the autumn where children learned a lot about the outdoors;
- At Christmas time the children went to see 'Down the Rabbit Hole' and then finished the term with a Christmas service in Whilton Church, followed by a party;
- Whilton Spinney Management Committee granted the pre-school a piece of land at the Spinney where they can dig, plant seeds and vegetables or just explore the woods.

7. Police Report

PCSO Sarah Gray was unable to attend the meeting, but she submitted a report on Whilton's crime statistics for the past year, detailed below:

Whilton Locks : 2 x criminal damage, 2 x theft from vehicles and 1x vehicle theft;

Whilton Village: 2 x vehicle thefts, 4 x thefts, 1 x drug offence and 2 x other offences.

8. Report from Whilton's Spinney Management Committee – Derek Brown

The Chairman said that it was hard to believe that the first steps to acquire land for a pocket park in Whilton were taken as long ago as July 2007 when Griff and Joan Davies of Roughmoor Grounds gifted the spinney to Whilton as their input for the millennium. Once NCC withdrew their support for the pocket park, it was decided to develop a conservation area for which grants were secured and to which Whilton Parish Council contributed financially.

Dedicated volunteers worked hard to clear the grounds and they continue to put in a lot of work. The Chairman thanked them for their time and assistance in maintaining the spinney, a valuable asset for the residents of Whilton Parish.

9. Report from Whilton's Neighbourhood Watch – Ros Gardner

After quoting the crime figures, detailed in the Police Report above, the Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator expressed concern about the time it takes for her to be notified by the messaging service, if at all. Some issues addressed in her report were:

- PCSO Sarah Gray is liaising with local youth leaders to see if some activities can be arranged for younger residents by linking Whilton with other villages for this project;
- Speeding through the village is an ongoing problem of which the police are aware;

Ros ended by saying that she will be resigning at the end of June and she thanked Derek Brown for all his help and guidance during her time as Co-Ordinator.

10. Report from Whilton's Gardeners' Association - Committee

The committee reported that to date only 16 of the 30 members they had last year, have renewed their membership. They require a membership of 20 – 30 people to meet the outgoings of the group which currently far outweigh the income, despite increasing the annual membership to £12/person as it is difficult to raise enough money or attract new members in a small village.

Other issues raised include:

- They are currently looking for a new Chair and new members;
- All meetings and excursions are open to non-members at a small fee;
- The Association meets 6 times a year, bimonthly, on the first Wednesday of the month;
- They plan a mixed programme of talks and visits to other gardens and try to ensure that the programme is educational, fun, has a social element;
- They also have an annual quiz and a seasonal supper at Christmas time.

11. Report from Whilton's Village Hall Management Group – Maurice Clements

The Village Hall Chairman reported that they ended the year in a good financial position and he thanked everybody who supported the village club. They were happy with building improvements made to the village hall and the new chairs that they have recently purchased. He also welcomed the three new members who joined the Village Hall Committee during the year and thanked everyone for their contribution.

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

The Churchwarden reported that St Andrews church is an 11th/12th/Century Grade 2 listed building which has to be kept in good repair. The church's 5-yearly architectural and electrical inspection took place in Autumn 2011. The church is now awaiting quotes for building work, the most urgent being work to masonry, the lead roof, loose tiles and rainwater goods.

The church is part of the 6-parish Spencer Benefice. Their share payable to the Diocese in 2011, determined mainly by attendance figures, amounted to £5,722. With other payments, their total expenditure for the year was £7,895. Payments are made from the general fund, subsidised by fund raising and at least £1000/annum need to be raised.

The church needs volunteers to help, not only financially, but also with cleaning and doing the flowers - please contact Jan Bowers if you can help;

The bells are in good order, the tower is the Daventry Branch of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers and they practice on Monday evenings.

Jan ended by thanking Maurice Clements for looking after the clock and Roy Haynes for mowing the Churchyard and for shaping the top of the new gatepost and installing it.

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

The Society meets bi-monthly and their themes are based mainly on Whilton's history. There is no membership charge and everyone is welcome to attend. Costs are limited mainly to renting the village hall but may need to rise when inviting speakers from outside their group. Five meetings were held during the previous year with topics covering

- "What to see in Whilton's Churchyard" - a leaflet was produced for visitors and is available in the church;
- "The life and times of Don Welch" who died in 2010;
- "Barley, Malt and Beer in Whilton";
- "Faces of Whilton" – photos of people who have lived in Whilton during the last 60 years; and
- Orphaned and Fatherless of Whilton – fatherless children from medieval to Victorian times.

14. Report from Whilton's Allotments Group – Brian Melling

The above group was formed in the autumn of 2010 to improve the look and use of the allotments through liaison with the Parish Council. They've worked together to cut back the Holly hedge, removed accumulated rubbish to the tip and negotiated the erection of a small shed for use by all allotment holders.

In November 2011 a new Allotment Agreement was negotiated, setting out the conditions of tenure, with the Parish Council undertaking to maintain and pay for water supply on site. There remain some issues to be resolved with the Parish Council during the coming year.

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

Gratitude was expressed to Derek and Shirley Brown's for their contribution to Whilton's newsletter during the past 18 years. An editorial team consisting of Anthea Hiscock, Teresa Leadbetter, Karen Whitcombe and Rochelle Lye has now been created to take over from them. Future newsletters will be issued quarterly, one per season, and parishioners are invited to provide the team with feedback, articles and information for the newsletter.

Another excellent source of news is the village website www.whilton-village.net an attractive, informative and up-to-date website, managed very efficiently by Gerry Heeley. Gratitude was expressed for his effort and hard work behind the scenes.

16. Whilton Parochial Charities - Keith Hiscock

Falling share prices have had a negative impact on the Charity's assets. Despite the challenging economy, only one application was made for a grant.

Residents in difficult circumstances were reminded that they were eligible for annual grants of up to £300 per person. All applications, whatever the hardship, will receive serious consideration. The qualifying criteria for grants are permanently displayed on village noticeboards.

There is no age limit and previous applicants are welcome to re-apply if they still meet the criteria. All applications should be submitted to the trustees, in writing, and will be dealt with confidentially. Ideas on how to achieve more applications from residents requiring help are welcome. The August Newsletter will carry a reminder to residents who would like to embark on university study or new work training to approach the Charity for financial assistance.

17. Whilton's Diamond Jubilee Plans – Anthea Hiscock

Whilton will celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee on Sunday 3 June and plans include:

- The publication of a photo survey book of the parish and its people in 2012 and, although not finalised, the aim is that it should not cost more than £20. These photos will also be exhibited in the village hall;
- There will be bell ringing in the afternoon;
- 2 – 4.30pm - an exhibition in the church of old photos photographs of people who have lived in Whilton during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, provided by the Local History Society;
- The Pre-school will decorate the village hall;
- 4.30pm - weather permitting, there will be a street party on the Green, otherwise it will be held in the village hall;
- 6 and 8pm – some of Whilton's gardens will be open to visitors.

Other business

- A resident enquired whether Whilton's Parish Plan had been adopted by DDC;
- Cllr Osborne said that Neighbourhood Planning will replace Parish Plans;
- The Village Hall Chairman offered to update the map in the village hall;