

**MINUTES OF NORTH WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL PARISH (RESIDENTS) MEETING
THURSDAY 5^H MAY 2022 AT 7.00PM
At the VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Councillors Marshall-Grint, Border, Kilham, Merrey, Cox, Lamb, Edwards, Nurse, Simpson, Harper
In attendance: Mrs R Curtis (Clerk)

1. Apologies – None

2. To receive an update regarding the Knights Hill Development from David Goddard

David Goddard thanked the PC for giving him the opportunity to speak at the meeting and reiterated that the aim is now to try and improve transport and highways issues in relation to the South Wootton Developments and Knights Hill proposed plans. He believes that County Council are beginning to take notice and progress is being made there. The next step is to build a case for public transport to access the Knight Hill development to try and reduce the traffic impact around the development and beyond. Providers are being approached and spoken to and there is good support from James Wild MP. David and Ben Colson have prepared a draft strategy to implement when the Knights Hill Reserved Matters come forward and stated that a local solicitor has agreed to present the case at the Planning Committee with a fee of £1,000. David asked if the PC would consider making a £250 contribution to the cost of this, with the remainder being met by himself, South Wootton PC and Castle Rising PC. There is hope that planning conditions could be improved through the reserved matters. Cllr Marshall-Grint thanked David for his presentation and said that consideration would be given to the contribution at the next meeting.

3. Chairman's Report

The year has seen the focus and activities of the Parish Council affected by national circumstances. We have still observed all government guidance re Covid.

James Bagge, County Deputy Lieutenant attended the meeting to present a Commemorative Plaque to acknowledge the resilience of our community during the difficult days of the pandemic.

There have been changes to the council throughout this time and we are grateful to all those who have given their time to the community. New members of the council have been Anthony Lamb, Marc Melton (subsequently had to step down) and Jim Blood. In particular our thanks go to all members of the PC including our hard working clerk Rachel in moving the council into the last year of working within the pandemic.

A significantly important initiative the PC has taken is The North Wootton Neighbourhood Plan. A full report will be given by Jason who had chaired the community steering group very well.

Throughout the past year we have all been thankful for our clerk who has kept all of our cogs turning smoothly thanks Rachel.

This report is divided into agenda areas for simplicity.

Law and order

There has been a number of dog thefts happening locally. An increase in fly tipping incidents and also rubbish being left including nitrous oxide canisters. A small number of motorcyclists on Wootton Park. A car windscreen was smashed.

A battery has been stolen from a farm vehicle on the marsh farm area. A fire at Cranmer Ave, where a conifer hedge was destroyed. Speeding continues around the village.

Car Parking continues to be an issue on match days at Wootton Park.

PC Dave Allcock will be holding a Street Surgeries at the Village Hall.

Open Forum

We have been grateful for input here from our Borough Councillor Elizabeth Nockolds who has kept us informed about the borough councils approach to the Covid pandemic as well as all things planning wise and of course grants.

County Cllr Nick Daunbey has kept us informed of County Council activity and grants. County Cllr Daunbey reported that there are some grant opportunities for road improvements and road safety. There was some discussion about which funding might be the most suitable to apply for if the PC agrees to purchase a SAM 2 sign.

The House on the Green planning application, was turned down by borough council and appealed. The PC nominated the House on the Green to become an ACV sadly turned down. Currently the agent for House on Green attended a PC meeting.

The bench at the top of Manor Road was in a bad state of repair a new one had been delivered and will be put in place. It has been donated by a family in the village in memory of their relatives.

Car park at Sandbach Road is still to be opened for use.

There has been a good response to the 'Caution, Duck Crossing stickers', with many being handed out to residents of both North and South Wootton. Drivers appear to be taking notice.

The bike restrictors are now a cause for concern as they are corroding badly.

Correspondence

We still have a situation with heavy haulage coming through the village.

A number of residents highlighted the problem with HGV's in the village and the difficulties of them manoeuvring through a residential area. There have been 2 recent incidents where vehicles have caused damage to walls at the top of Station Road.

Residents are reporting health problems associated with the noise especially late at night. It was agreed that the size/frequency and timing of the vehicles and their routes needs to be addressed. It was suggested and discussed that there could be an alternative route to

and from the farmland. A meeting with the solicitors representing some of the landowners has been arranged. There still are problems of dog fouling at Wootton Park it is becoming an issue in other areas of the village and also in South Wootton

Finance

As a council we have been well served by Will and Rachel who have guided us through precept setting, budgeting, monthly reconciliation to CIL applications for street lighting and car park development.

NWPC have once again kept the increase in precept low.

A project to replace the light bulbs in the Parish with LEDs is being completed atm.

Highways

The main issue has been the heavy haulage of agricultural vehicles. The matter of Highways acknowledging there is an issue with the heavy haulage travelling through the village from the Marsh Farms is ongoing. It was reported that the farmland is now under new ownership and will try and speak to the new owners.

Clerk has written to the 3 land owners of the area where there is road access from the marsh farms onto Edward Benefer Way. One response has been received so far which is favourable.

Clerk has submitted the application to the Parish Partnership for the SAM 2 sign.

Consideration was given to resurfacing the 'road' across the village green. Flooding in various parts of the village has been a problem.

Culverts and dykes are currently a problem.

The pathways along Ling Common Road have been resurfaced.

Many potholes have been reported and fixed.

Grass is encroaching on the pathway on the corner of Ling Common Road.

Tesco Express car park has been re-surfaced.

Wootton Park

Grateful thanks to Will and the Wootton Park Committee

Trees have been planted as well as wild flower areas.

The Rotary club are keen to assist with projects on the Park including litter picking and tree planting.

CIL application has been gained for the hardcore of the car park and the work completed great job.

The car park area resurfacing is complete. There is now space for a total of 35 cars to be parked in all weathers. The old area around the edge will be re-shingled so the whole car park surface is the same.

CCTV has been installed around the Pavilion area, one camera looking at the building and the other covering the path towards the car park.

Drainage around the pavilion is still cause for concern and awaiting a drainage company to attend to investigate.

King's Lynn Soccer School have found a new venue at North Wootton Academy.

Anita Howard's work is ongoing in applying for funding for the infant play area. She has met with suppliers to obtain visuals and quotes.

The Community Payback team have attended Park weekly doing a range of tasks from building bridges, planting trees to digging ditches.

The condition of the cycle restrictors is getting worse; it was agreed for the Clerk to ask Highways to remove them asap.

The newly planted trees at the end of Cranmer Ave are healthy and being watered regularly.

The Community Payback team are now attending the Park on a project basis instead of every week.

The application for CIL funding for the Pavilion changing rooms was unsuccessful. Cllr Nockolds gave a breakdown of the points awarded for the application.

SWPC has agreed that the 9 Acre field will be left for wildflowers and wildlife for the time being.

The green fingered volunteers will start up again in the next month or so to carry out work on the Park.

The Environment Group at North Wootton Academy have designed posters to try and stop people letting their dogs foul on the pavements. The dog waste bins are filling up quickly and require emptying more frequently.

Street lighting

The lamps are being replaced with LED's.

Planning

A variety of planning applications have been considered. The PC have worked in conjunction with CR and SW Parish councils on the Knights Hill development and appeal. The House on the Green development has been a live issue for quite a while.

Neighbourhood Plan

Three hundred survey responses were received. The steering group met on 4th April to discuss the feedback. It was clear that residents do not want to see any more development and to maintain green spaces, habitats etc. Further work now needs to be done - initially in the following areas - Green Spaces, Green Corridors, Footpaths and Local Views. The aim is to involve the community in this next step of evidence gathering ready to prepare policies for the plan. It was acknowledged that many comments made about the village are unable to be incorporated into the Plan as they do not relate to planning issues, but these community actions will be taken forward either by the PC or referred to other groups.

Village Hall

The hall has continued to develop in quality with a hard working committee bringing a variety of bookings including bingo, yoga, markets, flea markets and elections. A very full diary each week.

Car parking and path has been improved around the hall.

Plans are going ahead for a front porch.

The Village

Norfolk County Council contacted the PC to state they are selling the triangle of land on Priory Lane, at the Woodland Gardens entrance. The Parish Council agreed to the purchase of the land at Priory Lane for £3,000 with the removal of the condition that NCC carries out works to the culverts and ditches.

Parish Partnership Funding – In response to the issue of speeding in the village, the Parish Council agreed to bid for a SAM2 speed sign from this grant

The Remembrance Day event happened.

Traffic calming measures have been considered on Priory Lane.

Platinum Jubilee

At the moment we in North Wootton have organised 3 events to happen over that bank holiday weekend

Beacon Lighting at the Village Hall on Thursday Evening 2nd June

Picnic on the Park – Friday 3rd June

Social Event in the Village Hall – Saturday 4th June

Thanks to all members of the Parish Council both for their time and commitment as a team in servicing our wonderful North Wootton Parish

4. Responsible Finance Officer's Report

In the financial report last year I did mention some of the expenses that we would incur this year, that were above and beyond the normal. Therefore our gross expenditure to the end of this financial year of 2020/21 was £61893 versus a budget of £40200. However most of this overspend can be accounted for by the major project that was held on Wootton Park to make the car park all weather. This project totalled £16264 and most of this cost was covered off by the Borough Council CIL Payment of £10000 and then the 3rd party funding coming in from South Wootton Parish Council the Football Club and Wootton Park this totalled £14500, and if we deduct the VAT that we have claimed back then the actual expenditure comes in at £13012. This was a very successful project and I think has bought a lot of benefit to the users of Wootton Park.

The Council debated the precept for 2022/23 and it was agreed that we should ask for a precept increase of 3% this was passed as acceptable at the January meeting due to the ongoing costs to replacing our ageing street lights and the potential issues we have with the current Village Hall. I have set the budget for this year at £49500 and will hope to come in just below. This does not allow for the already agreed spend for the street lighting project that has been agreed from last year but has not been paid for yet. This is budgeted to come in around £33000, again we will be receiving a Borough Council CIL Payment of £10000. However I think I speak for the majority of the committee in that we feel this was morally and environmentally the correct thing to do, we have received some very positive comments from the parishioners. I trust the council are still happy to sign these off from the reserves.

I am unaware of any new expenditures that will need to be allowed for in the forthcoming year.

It is worth mentioning that as we seek funding for these larger projects we do need to allow for some element of match funding.

We start the new financial year with reserves of over £54500 this is equivalent to a years worth of the gross expenditure. This is as always at the higher end point of the recommended normal range for a Parish Council Reserve (between 3-12 months gross expenditure). So I am happy to report that our finances are in a good a position as they could be in the current circumstances. I would just like to thank the rest of the committee for their continue support and encouragement.

5. Wootton Park Report

This year has been a good year in the Park, we have achieved some of the bigger projects that have been on the to do list for some time.

As part of the national project to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee we have planted 10 trees in the park. These have now become part of the national project "The Queens Green Canopy". We are all being encouraged to plant trees to celebrate the 70 years of the Queens reign. There is a picture of us planting one of these trees on the official website for this project. Our thanks also goes to the Priory Rotary club for being involved with some of the planting and contributing to the cost of the juvenile trees, the species of tree range from Swamp cypress, Tibetan cherry to a couple of Indian bean trees. The idea is to create additional interest in the park as we walk around, and a lasting memorial to the Queens exceptional achievement.

We have installed CCTV on the pavilion, this will hopefully reduce the amount of anti-social behaviour around the pavilion.

The project to increase the size of the all weather parking in the car park has now been completed, this now ensures that the whole car park is usable all year around. It is very pleasing to see that the car park can now accommodate over 30 cars. Thanks goes to Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, North & South Wootton Parish Councils and the Woottons Football Club for raising all the money required to achieve this project and M C Nurse Builders Ltd for a good job.

This year we have seen the addition of four new rubbish bins, to replace ones that were becoming rusty and looking past their best.

The wildflower strips on the North and South Wootton Gaps always look so good, we plan to do this each year and my thanks goes to Nolan Mills for his hard work and for keeping an eye on this project throughout the year.

The WPA 200 Club is now in its sixth year, this is another way of raising much needed funds for the park, we cannot seem to get any more than 120 members, because it seems as when members do not win in the year, they do not renew. All we can do is keep promoting it as much as possible because it is a hugely beneficial way raising funds for the park. This year we have used the money to pay for trees, spring bulbs and the wild flower strips.

I am pleased to report that the club finances are as solid as they were last year. The breakdown for the rest of the accounts will be covered at greater length in the treasures report. My thanks go to Tracey for holding the roll as treasurer and keeping an eye on the expenditure on Wootton Park.

The community payback team continue to be a great benefit to the park with various jobs being tackled over the year. This has ranged from general pruning in the park, dyke maintenance and distributing wood chippings for pathways. They are still coming to the park

once a week, which is a great help with the more labour intensive work. The best project for them this year was to totally rebuild one of the bridges over the dyke.

I would lastly like to extend my thanks to everyone on this committee for their continued support and encouragement. I look forward to another year on the park and hope that the weather this summer is as good as it was last summer.

6. Village Hall Report

The Village Hall has had a very successful year since fully reopening after COVID.

The Village Markets started up again in May 2021 and have been held monthly since – apart from the February Market which had to be cancelled due to severe weather.

VJ Day August 2021 was a huge success, attracting a wide range of local people to turn up and enjoy the fabulous and free entertainment (including our Mayor). This was ‘the’ event of 2021 and really has set the standard for future Village Hall celebrations. Bingo has restarted and continues to be a very popular and well attended monthly event. It’s a really friendly atmosphere so if you’ve not been but fancy giving it a go you’ll be sure to be welcome.

The annual Christmas Fair was very busy, with a huge variety of stalls offering all kinds of seasonal gifts and products. A certain beer seller sold out his inventory 3 times during the day!

Indian nights continue to be very popular, with a core group of fans as well as newcomers enjoying the delicious offerings. The inaugural “Indian High Tea” event was held recently and more are planned.

Bookings are plentiful – Yoga, Baby Massage, Dance Academies and several others have regular classes. There are also a large number of private parties being booked.

There are currently 11 members of the Village Hall Management Committee, and the finances are very healthy: £22,801.44 in the current account and £15,312.48 in the premium account.

Regarding plans for the Village Hall going forward, planning permission has been sought to add a porch on the front of the hall to improve access to events.

Cllr Marshall-Grint thanked the Village Hall Committee on behalf of the PC in its role as Trustee.

7. Village Hall Report

During Parish Council meetings, it was decided to pursue the aim of obtaining a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of North Wootton. This plan would grant the villagers a statutory voice in any planning and development initiatives within the village for the next several years, helping to maintain the village atmosphere and facilities.

A steering group was set up of 8 people from the village, and the decision was made to employ a firm of consultants to help with the application process. This was funded by a grant, so there was no cost to the parish itself.

To judge the feelings and wishes of the villagers, a survey was sent out earlier this year to every household in the village. We received 300 replies, and this data was then analysed in order to prepare a draft report.

A housing needs assessment was also undertaken, to investigate which types of housing were most required in the village. This data also informs the draft report.

At present, the consultants are in the process of finalising the draft report before the initial submission to the Borough Council. The steering group are cataloguing green spaces, views and buildings throughout the village that the villagers that responded to the survey indicated were important.

Looking forward, once the final report is written there will be a referendum in the parish to decide whether or not to implement the plan. This is expected to take place around September 2022.

8. Trinity Hospital Report

Cllr Kilham reported the following for Trinity Hospital;

Due to the uncertainty of Covid the Founders Day lunch was cancelled in February, with a more suitable gathering outside planned for the summer.

Residents Wellbeing - Sadly during the last year one lady has passed away. The age of current residents seems to be getting younger and there are 6 residents at present.

Mercer’s Company Grants - These have been paid.

Other Repairs - A significant amount of money has been spent on maintenance in the entrance porch and refurbishments carried out in the laundry room. A large crack in the chapel wall has been repaired.

Windows - Some glazing has been replaced which has meant units are better insulated.

Heating - Consideration is being given to upgrading the heating system and this needs to be reviewed. Meanwhile there have been some improvements made to the boiler and hot water system.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

Signed Chairman Date