

News from Cold Norton Parish Council, including comments from the March 2005 meeting

Planning

Two applications were noted as being approved by the District Council (in agreement with the Parish Council's recommendations). They are those relating to Hawthorns, Victoria Road (replacement dwelling), and 15 Green Trees Avenue (demolition of existing house; erection of new 4 bedroom house).

There had been an appeal against the District Council's refusal of consent (again in line with the Parish Council recommendation) for change of use of former railway cutting to garden and erection of games room at 36 The Fairways. The Planning Inspectorate has dismissed this appeal.

At the February meeting our historian councillor Sue Garnham had noted that she has seen documentary evidence that a barn in St Stephens Road has a Tudor floor. The only barn that this can be is a Listed barn near to Norton Hall, but the clerk's later enquiries found that the floor had long ago been covered in concrete. District Council Conservation Officer Robert Scrimgeour confirmed that many such barn floors were concreted over during the 20th century and that, if there were a Tudor floor underneath, it would not be possible to remove the concrete without irreversible damage to the surface of the floor underneath – disappointing news!

Highways and Road Safety

The Parish Council has long been trying to establish that the path from the Latchingdon Road railway bridge through to Ferris Avenue and Station Crescent (including those two roads) is a *de facto* public right of way. A recent letter to County Council asked that this status be recognised for this path, in the same way as it had been so recognised for the path to the south of and parallel with Latchingdon Road (Norton Chase) – which is maintained by County Council as a public right of way, even though it is not yet on the Definitive Map. The County Council has refuted our claim, and it looks likely that the only way forward with this will be via a claim as has been used for the path along the old railway line. However we know that we cannot gain such quick action as has been the case with the old railway line, which was acted upon quickly purely because it has actually been blocked. The main reason that County Council maintenance of this path from Latchingdon Road is needed is because it is a much-used and recognised safer route to school, since it avoids the busy Latchingdon Road.

We hear from County Council that the widening of the footway to the Post Office and Country Produce is likely to be done early in the new financial year (which starts on 1st April). At present they are hoping that they can gain enough width by methods other than land purchase, even though this land purchase had been included in the Locally Determined Budget in December 2002.

Regarding **the Village Hall project** reported last month, this matter came before the Parish Council's March meeting, and it was noted that the Parish Council will need to give more consideration to this when it is known approximately how much might raised by way of grant funding. At that stage a decision will be needed on whether (and, if so, how much) PWLB loan is required, at which time further local consultation will be needed.

The Parish Council was pleased to note that the County Council is to give an automatic grant to all Parish Councils of £1,000 each, payable early in the new financial year

An opening ceremony for the newly purchased **Nature Reserve in St Stephens Road** is planned for Sunday 10th April at 11 a.m. A sign has been made, and this will be installed at this time.

Retirements: - March was not a good month for the Parish Council, because two people confirmed they are retiring. One is Alec Paul as Village Caretaker – members commented that “*he is a fantastic man*” and that he has “*done a tremendous job*”. He has made a clearly visible difference to the village, and this was in particular noted via the prizes and awards that have been accorded us. And I am the second person to be soon retiring (as the Parish Council’s clerk/RFO). This job has been a part of my life since 1989, and I have very much enjoyed it and will be very sorry to go. The Parish Council has always been a tremendous team to work for, and I can see at first hand just how much they care about Cold Norton, and just how much they strive to achieve whatever is good for all the various members of Cold Norton’s society. Clearly we need two (or three) people to replace us, and so there are notices on the parish notice boards publicising the vacancies of Village Caretaker, Parish Clerk, and also parish grass cutter (which was Alec’s other role). For further information on Mr. Paul’s job, please contact me (contact details below), and for my job please contact the Parish Council’s Chairman, Prof. Les Barclay, on 01621 828576.

Dates of the next Parish Council meetings – The forthcoming monthly meetings are scheduled for the first Thursdays of each month – next meeting being Thursday 7 April. The Parish Council’s AGM will be held as part of the monthly meeting scheduled for Thursday 5th May (if that is not the date of the General Election). Cold Norton’s Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 3rd May, so please put that in your diary. Parish Council meetings are held at 8 p.m. in the Committee Room of the Village Hall, and members of the public are warmly welcomed to hear the proceedings and to speak during the time set aside for that purpose.

<p><u>To contact the Parish Council:</u> Write to the Parish Clerk (Mary Bryant) at 5 Thatchers Croft, Latchingdon, Chelmsford, CM3 6UD, or phone/fax 01621 744446, or e-mail to mary.bryant@ntlworld.com. Cold Norton’s web site is www.cold-norton.org.uk</p>
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