

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

From the Annual Parish Meeting, Annual General Meeting
and May 2007 Meeting

APM – 25th April: four Parish Councillors were present plus 24 members of the public (from a base of 873 registered electors /400 homes). Mrs Gloria Gold, as **Chairman** of the PC summarised the year, covering what the **precept monies** had been used for, including grass cutting and general maintenance of the playing field and Cowpiece Nature Reserve and other areas of open space around the village, plus safety inspections on the children's play equipment and a donation to the Church to help with its upkeep. Mrs Gold advised that the PC had in the course of the year considered 35 **planning applications**, 2 had been agricultural (for information only), 26 decisions made by the PC had been upheld by Maldon District Council, 4 decisions were overturned and 3 were still going through the planning process.

With reference to **Highways matters** Mrs Gold advised that the zebra crossing was finally put into place during the course of the last year, but that although there are still a few 'teething' problems with the VAS (vehicle activated signs), there has been a reduction in the average speed of cars going through the village from 39 mph to 34.9 mph. The surface water problem in Latchingdon Road turned out to be a spring and has been dealt with. Honeypot Lane has been resurfaced and St. Stephens Road is scheduled to be resurfaced in this new financial year. Surging manholes in the village have also been dealt with, but some finishing off is still to be carried out.

Regarding **Public Rights of Way (footpaths)** these continue to take up a large percentage of the Parish Council's time. The PC has now joined the P3 partnership scheme and through this partnership it hopes to produce a footpaths map. All footpaths in the village now have new wooden signposts and a handrail has been added to the entrance to the bridleway and footpath at the bend in St. Stephens Road.

Mrs Gold went on to say that unfortunately there has been an increase in mindless **vandalism** to the play equipment and at Cowpiece. But that on the positive side Cold Norton has once again been **commended by the Essex Playing Fields Association** for its playing field and the children's play area. Mrs Gold thanked Mr Dave Bull for his hard work in these areas.

Planning permission has been granted to carry out the extension works at the **village hall**, a lovely new kitchen has been fitted and the lottery bid is ready to be sent off. Mrs Gold thanked the Village Hall Management Committee and Mary Bryant and Roger Hawes for their hard work and dedication in filling out the lottery bid.

The **web site** is updated regularly and has an average of 260 visits per month, but its format and content are being reviewed - any ideas would be welcomed.

The **allotments**, thanks to Sue Garnham, are looking splendid and six are now being used. Water is now available on the site.

Mrs Gold closed her report by announcing that unfortunately two of the long serving Parish Councillors had decided not to stand again and went on to thank on behalf of Cold Norton, Sue Garnham and Andrea Allen for their numerous years of service to the community. Mrs Gold also thanked District Councillor Lawrence Cooper, who has also decided not to stand for election, for all his work on behalf of the village.

The Chairman's report was followed by a report by **District Councillor**, Mr. John Archer, who began by talking about the support that he and his fellow District Councillor Lawrence Cooper give at District level, to all decisions made by the PC - in planning matters only 4 of the PC's decisions were overruled by Maldon District Council. Mr Archer advised that **Maldon District Council staff** restructuring by Mr Steve Watson is still ongoing. The **Council Tax** at 3.5% is one of the lowest in Essex and is slightly below inflation, but has not meant any cuts in services – Mr Archer went on to say that **waste collection** will not be changed to a fortnightly service

Mr Archer then spoke about: **Promenade Park** - very busy and the new splash area is proving very popular; **Wind Farm Appeal** – in June; **Bradwell Power Station** – now completely de-fuelled/very low radiation waste on site; Audit re '**direction of travel**' - Maldon is now doing well, as it is also doing in regards to the **e-government** targets. Re the **Zebra Crossing** Mr Archer acknowledged that there had been mixed reaction to it's installation, but it has provided a safe place to cross and further methods to reduce speed through the village were still being investigated.

As Mr Mead, the **County Councillor**, was unable to be at the APM, Mr Archer briefly advised details of county matters, namely the trial switching off street lights is on hold at the moment and that Councillor Bass has resigned his position re roads.

PCSO Steve Butler from **Maldon Police Station** spoke briefly, advising that there have been fewer crimes this year than last year in Maldon, down to 8 per day and in the village we are very fortunate that it is less than 1. What is of concern in the village is **speeding** - the VAS signs have helped a bit and PCSO Butler is still visiting the village with a mobile speed gun and has reported 27 people for speeding offences. PCSO Butler warned of **distraction burglary** which is of concern in this area. If the **street lights** are switched off, PCSO Butler advised that figures are being recorded now so that if this scheme proceeds, comparisons will be able to be made before and after in respect of its effect on crime during the switching off period.

Next Philip Wakeling gave a brief update re the **Village Hall Project** – a quantity surveyor has costed out the designs for the extension at £400,000; an application for lottery funding has been submitted for £330,000, other grants will be applied for, the PC has pledged £15 – 20,000 and the balance

will be made up by fund raising events organised by the VHMC. The result of the lottery application should be known in October/November. If the lottery application is successful work should commence in 2009. The kitchen has been renovated with grant funding. The next major fund raising event is the two day Train Event on Saturday and Sunday 16th and 17th June.

At the end of the reports there was an open session of questions and discussions. Two **Questions** were raised: the first concerned the **speed limit** between Cold Norton and Stow Maries – concerns were voiced that since the measures recently installed to reduce speeding through Stow Maries it gave the impression that once beyond these i.e. near the Golf Club the speed limit was higher than 40 mph. The Parish Councillors promised to discuss this matter with Highways.

The second question highlighted the fact that the **village pub** is again closed; the Parish Councillors were asked that if an application for change of use for the pub to become a house/s what would be their reaction. The response was that the Parish Councillors would only favour low cost housing on this site.

The meeting was officially closed at 8.40 pm and refreshments were served; visitors were invited to discuss matters further with members of the Parish Council or other speakers during this period.

The Parish Council AGM was held on 9th May 2006

Prior to the commencement of the AGM the new Parish Councillors duly signed the necessary paperwork. The Parish Councillors are:

Mr. John Archer
Professor Leslie Barclay
Mrs. Gloria Gold
Mr. Charles Litscher
Mrs. Alison McDonald
Mr. Philip Wakeling

At the AGM officers etc were elected as follows:

Chairman: Mrs. Gloria Gold
Vice Chairman: Prof. Leslie Barclay
Playing Field Reps: Mr. Charles Litscher and Mr. Philip Wakeling
Nature Conservation Area Reps: Mrs Gloria Gold and Mr. Charles Litscher
Village Hall Reps: Prof. Barclay and Mr. John Archer
Footpaths Rep: Mr. Philip Wakeling
PC Nominee on School Board of Governors: Mrs. Allen remains and this is permissible even though Mrs Allen is no longer a PC Member
The Internal Auditor was confirmed as ASAP Office Services and signatories will be Professor Barclay, Mr Wakeling and Mrs McDonald.

The AGM was followed by the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council

Highways Matters: in order to stop water from St. Stephens Road going down Station Crescent, the kerb line outside No. 9 St. Stephens Road is to be altered which 'direct' will water into the existing drain on this corner. Highways have also confirmed that work to the raised manhole cover between 10 & 12 St. Stephens Road and the uneven section of paving outside the school will commence very shortly.

Police Matters: Distraction Burglary - PCSO Butler advised that there is a false Anglian Water van operating in the area 'checking' for leaks and requiring entry to homes – residents are advised to check ID of all callers. If unsure don't let anyone into your home. Random visits with the speed gun are still ongoing.

Children's Playground: the enclosed area is closed for use as it is sinking – a warning sign, warning tape and a padlock on the gate have been put there to stop entry, but 'vandals' keep removing. Please do not use this play area until it is safe to do so.

Public Health: the Primary Care Trust wants to hear your views – please see 'ad' in this magazine for more information.

Parish Council Meetings: scheduled or provisionally scheduled for 2007: 6th June, 4th July, 5th September, 3rd October, 7th November & 5th December. All meetings start at 8 pm in the Committee Room at the Village Hall. Members of the public are warmly welcomed to hear the proceedings and to speak during the time set aside for that purpose.

To contact the Parish Council: please write to: The Parish Clerk (Maria Dyer), at Exordium, 30b Latchingdon Road, Cold Norton, Chelmsford, Essex. CM3 6JG. E-Mail to mariadyer30@yahoo.co.uk or phone (Monday to Friday before 5 pm please) 01621 829566.

Cold Norton Web Site: www.cold-norton.org.uk