

News from Cold Norton Parish Council,
including comments from meeting held in June 2005

A **new Village Caretaker** has very recently been selected from a number of applicants. We have of course missed all the work done by Alec Paul (indeed the lack of his good work is now apparent around Cold Norton), so we are pleased to find someone to take over. The role involves gardening work and maintenance of and repairs to parish council property – mainly on the recreation ground and Cowpiece Nature Reserve, plus litter picking around the village. So if there is any such work that you have noticed and we have not, then please do inform the clerk, who can then offer such tasks to the new Village Caretaker.

A check has been made of the **footway east of the Latchingdon Road railway bridge**, and as a result some landowners have been asked to cut back hedgerows. The landowners have been very helpful in this regard, but if anyone feels that there is a problem, please inform the clerk. For safety reasons it is the parish council's aim to keep this footway clear and of optimum width, because it is much used by pedestrians to access the Country Produce shop and post office.

The **Annual Highways Liaison meeting** (with representatives from County Council Highways) is to be arranged in July. This is a useful opportunity to see at first hand where there are highways and road safety problems in Cold Norton, and to consider solutions.

We have recently received notification of the location of the **proposed zebra crossing**. We had previously been told that the vehicle-activated signs (VAS) would be temporary, and would be made permanent only if, after a trial period without VAS, the traffic speeds increased so much that use of the zebra crossing was unsafe. However we were then advised of a new proposal - that the VAS are at the outset to be permanent ones.

The need for a crossing has been evident, well publicised, and well supported for nearly three years, and has been reported at at least two annual parish meetings. Residents and the parish council have considered it to be a safety issue, in view of the school and the traffic of pedestrians to the playing field. But the recent notification about the VAS and zebra crossing brought forward some residents living close to the proposed VAS who were very unhappy about their proximity to their properties. At a very lengthy site meeting on 16 June, their complaints in the main related to loss of amenity to their homes, and reasons were discussed for moving the VA signs and zebra crossing a short distance to the east. Up until this time, the only concerns had been from County Council – about cost, and also it was said at a “Safer Journeys to School” meeting that statistically zebra crossings raise the incidence of accidents. The County Council officer referred to this at the site meeting. However the question has been asked again *“if this is true, why does the County Council go to the expense of zebra crossings in villages elsewhere. Please show us these statistics – in order to make an informed decision we need the evidence”*. But neither the answer to the first question nor the evidence to answer the second question has been forthcoming – even now, it seemingly can't be found in writing.

The parish council is currently in discussions with County Council to organise a public meeting (at which a County Council representative could make a presentation) in order to air all the views and to have the opportunity to consider any new safety and environmental aspects. But as we go to press these arrangements haven't been finalised. Please watch parish council notice boards and the village columns in the press. If you have any views we would be pleased to hear of them as soon as possible – please send them to the new parish clerk – contact details below.

The public inquiry into the **claim for the right of way along the disused railway line** is now completed, and we await the result from the Planning Inspector in a few weeks' time. There were many people who attended the inquiry to give their evidence of their use of this path over very many years, and nearly 100 evidence forms confirmed that this use has been unchallenged and “as of right”, but of course the evidence from the 3 landowners involved gives a different point of view. The path is so beautiful that it would be a tragedy to lose it from public use.

Similarly the parish council is starting the process of claiming as a public footpath **the path from the Latchingdon Road railway bridge through to (and including) Ferris Avenue and Station Crescent**. This also has been used as such since time immemorial. It is still much used, and it provides a route to school that is safer than the route along the busy Latchingdon Road. But first we need to hear from

anyone who has used that path during the past 20 years – not necessarily for all of that time, but we need to know dates. If you can help, please can you contact the parish clerk, as contact details below?

A resident had reported to the clerk that **the payphone near to Three Ashes Corner** had been badly damaged. This was accordingly reported and has now been repaired.

Dates of future meetings - The Parish Council has agreed that monthly meetings shall be scheduled for the first Wednesday of the month in future. However, as is usual at this time of year (because of summer holidays), the July and August meetings do not follow this pattern. They are presently scheduled for Wednesday 20 July and Wednesday 31 August (please watch the notice boards and the village columns in the press). 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. At the Chairman's discretion, the meeting may be closed for members of the public to speak at an appropriate time.

To contact the Parish Council: Write to the Parish Clerk (Maria Dyer) at "Exordium", 30b Latchingdon Road, Cold Norton. Chelmsford, CM3 6JG, or phone 01621 829566, fax: 01621 826729, or e-mail: mariadyr30@yahoo.co.uk Cold Norton's web site is www.cold-norton.org.uk
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