



**Cold Norton's Annual Parish Meeting
Held at 8 pm on Wednesday 24th April 2013
At Cold Norton Village Hall**

THOSE PRESENT: Parish Councillors:
Mr. J. Archer (also a District Councillor)
Professor L. Barclay (Vice Chairman)
Mrs S Garnham
Mrs V. Jennings
Mr C. Litscher
Mr S. Rivers
Mr. P. Wakeling (Chairman)

Mrs. P. Channer, County Councillor
Ms S White, District Councillor
PCSO T. Gower
Mrs. M. Dyer (Parish Clerk) and 40 Members of the Public

WELCOME

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr Philip Wakeling welcomed everyone to the meeting, not just Cold Norton residents but those from neighbouring villages who were in attendance to hear the presentation from ECC regarding Broadband. Mr Wakeling then introduced Mr Philip Wilson, Technology Development Officer at ECC.

**PRESENTATION FROM MR PHILIP WILSON, TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER,
ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

“The Superfast Essex Broadband Project is about dramatically improving broadband access across the county by investing some £13million of public money into the rural telecoms network. This will create a network fit for the 21st Century where choice and competition will ensure high quality, reliable broadband at affordable prices to the customer.”

Mr Wilson went on to expand on this statement: In 2008 broadband cables were installed at the Water Tower, but these are not sufficient to service all businesses, residents and other social groups – **Superfast Broadband is to ‘plug the gap’**. £6.5 million is coming from the Government, match funded by ECC and selected supplier will be expected to input into the total budget, which will be c£25-30million in total. Nationally it is expected that 90% of premises across the county will have access to super broadband by 2015; in Essex all premises should have access to **at least 2Mbps by 2015 and 8Mbps by 2020** – talks with supplier are going well. Mr Wilson did advise that some properties which are few in number

at ends of lanes may still experience difficulties until fibres (in 'green cabinets') are upgraded – it is hoped that BT etc. will upgrade these. Where areas are not covered off by the Private Sector (generally larger conurbations) the State will intervene to provide using public sector money – Cold Norton is one of these areas.

Mr Wilson asked all present to go to the Superfast Broadband web site and complete the **questionnaire/survey** which will help ECC to define commercial and community need in priority i.e. work and health care issues etc. Results of this survey will influence which villages will be 'serviced' first.

Mr Wilson advised that **Partners for Superfast Essex**, providing information re where service is needed, currently consisted of:

- Essex County Council
- Church of England Diocese of Chelmsford
- Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)
- Southend Council
- Thurrock Council
- Department for Culture , Media and Sport
- Essex Chambers of Commerce
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Rural Communities Council of Essex (RCCE)
- University of Essex, Colchester

Mr Wilson then invited questions:

Question: Who is going to be the supplier(s)?

Answer: BT and Jujitsu

Question: Why not continue to use the service on the Water Tower?

Answer: This will still be used

Question: When will service start to villages?

Answer: November 2013 is confirmed roll out for network upgrade

Question: What will happen to properties without access to 'green' cabinets?

Answer: New cabinets will be installed (North Fambridge will need)

Question: Is Stow Maries one of the white areas?

Answer: Yes

Question: Will the fibre optics be on poles?

Answer: No, it is best to go underground as they are fragile

Mr Wakeling thanked Mr Wilson for his presentation.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE POLICE

This was given by Police Community Support Officer Tom Gower, who advised that there has been another huge **restructuring of the Police Force** involving a merge of teams. There is a **Neighbouring Police Team based in South Woodham Ferrers** dealing with

community issues including agricultural problems and caravan theft; there is also a **motor bike team** also working out of South Woodham Ferrers.

PCSO Gower then advised that for Maldon **crime figures were all down** for 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013 compared to reports for the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012:

- All Crime has reduced by 3.9% (92 less offences)
- Theft from Vehicles has reduced by 12.3% (44 less offences)
- Criminal Damage has reduced by 15.0% (59 less offences)
- Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents have reduced by 11.6% (177 less incidents)

PCSO Gower advised that whilst he can be contacted through Southminster Police Station that the local team are now 'more mobile' and can provide a quicker response as they don't need to go back to the Station.

The subject of **inconsiderate parking at the school** was raised, but PCSO Gower advised that the Police cannot give out parking tickets, only MDC can do this, however the a Police presence can act as a deterrent.

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 8TH MAY 2012

These were approved and signed as a correct record.

THE PARISH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT BY CHAIRMAN MR PHILIP WAKELING

Mr. Wakeling started his report by confirming the current **Parish Councillors**: John Archer, Les Barclay, Sue Garnham, Von Jennings, Charles Litscher, Stewart Rivers and himself, Philip Wakeling, advising that the Parish Council meets monthly and that all meetings are open to the public.

Regarding **finance** Mr Wakeling advised that at year end there was £13,500 in the Parish Council account, that there had been c £7,300 underspend on the Village Hall project that would be spent on the VH toilets and that the PC planned reserve is £5,500. The Parish Council accounts are published and audited. The precept was set at £22,000 a 2% increase. The precept covers a range of tasks, including grass cutting, street lights, village caretaker, maintenance, PC office administration, village hall loans.

Moving onto planning Mr Wakeling advised that the Parish Council is asked to comment on **planning applications** received by MDC. Over the past year the PC had been consulted on 30 applications, of these MDC supported the PC's view for 15 applications, but did not support 5, the PC did not comment on one application and MDC decision is still awaited for 9 applications. Of the 30 applications the PC considered they did not object to the plans proposed within 22 applications; the PC objected to 7 applications and recommended that MDC refuse; one application the PC did not comment on. Mr Wakeling reiterated that the general form on planning is set out in the **Parish Council's Planning Policy**, now reinforced by the **Cold Norton Village Survey** in which 97% value the **open rural aspect** of Cold Norton. The most significant recent development in the village is the 10 properties under construction in **Bardwell's Yard**, adding to the range of properties available in the village, which will contribute to the rates. There have been issues with mud etc. and the Parish Council will continue to monitor the site access onto Latchingdon Road.

Regarding MDC's **Local Development Plan** Mr Wakeling advised that CNPC has vigorously objected to the 300 new homes being proposed in **North Fambridge**, along with neighbouring Parish Councils and South Woodham Ferrers Town Council. ECC has now also declared it is against this proposal. MDC will release the results of consultation in the Summer.

Moving onto **Highway Matters** the Chairman advised that a list is on display in the hall to view the current maintenance issues reported to ECC; two of major concerns are **surface water** on Latchingdon Road and the **condition of the footway** from the bridge to Country Produce.

The Village Hall – Mr Wakeling advised that the project is now completed including remedial works and that c£7,300 remains underspent which will be used towards renovation of the **toilets**. It is proposed to now store **village documents** including photographs at the hall.

The next topic covered related to **Anti-Social Behaviour** and Mr Wakeling said that it was good to have the Police present at this meeting reporting a reduction in crime figures. Mr Wakeling then thanked Mrs Andi Allen for her many years as the village **Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator** – Mrs Allen has now stepped down from this role.

Mr Wakeling then turned his attention to **Open Spaces**, thanking Cllr Charles Litscher for his continued overseeing and maintenance of **Cowpiece Nature Reserve**. In regards to the **Playing Fields** Mr Wakeling talked briefly about works needed, including the removal of the **trees** behind the swings after which the **tiles under the swings** can be replaced.

The **children's football** team, Woodham Radars, who play their home games in Cold Norton are maintaining the pitch and have installed goals which are available for all to use. The Chairman announced that Cold Norton had received **two awards** from Essex Playing Fields Association, one for the Playing Field and one for the Football Pitch.

Mr Wakeling then thanked Mr Roy (Whizz) Wiseman for all his work as '**Village Caretaker**'

Next Mr Wakeling gave a report about **Public Rights of Way** (footpaths), advising that the Parish Council continued to work with the ECC PRoW Officer to keep paths walkable. Grants had been received towards costs of the production of a Cold Norton **Footpath Map**, which was now ready to go to print. Mr Wakeling advised that the Parish Council was working with local residents and the ECC PRoW in relation to the flooding issue on FP 28.

In relation to other significant issues: firstly, Mr Wakeling thanked Mrs Sue Garnham for being instrumental in the successful **Queens Jubilee** celebrations, the Parish Council had supported the event and children in the village had all received a special **commemorative mug**. Secondly Mr Wakeling advised that the **Village Survey** had been printed and delivered around the village. And thirdly in relation to the **ECC Salt Bag Scheme** Cllr Charles Litscher and his team of volunteers were thanked for keeping the village moving.

The Chairman then went on to acknowledge the continuing hard work of the committee of **The Norton**, now in its third year, in providing an excellent amenity for the village & had been successful in raising the £100,000 deposit needed towards the eventual purchase of the pub.

Mr Wakeling then thanked his fellow Parish Councillors, the District and County Councillors and the Parish Clerk, Maria Dyer, for all their work and support over the past year.

REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MS SUE WHITE

District Cllr Ms White started her report talking about the **Maldon Harbour Improvement Committee**, advising that the coastguard has taken over the guide for good sailing practice and the Marine Management Organisation has taken over a **new licensing order**, which

includes dredging and adding/removing items from the river bed – this should assist in stopping the illegal fishing.

The next topic covered related to **Support for Older People**, District Cllr Ms White advised that there have been concerns raised that when the emergency cords had been activated, that the calls had not been forwarded to the call centre, but that Moat was looking into this issue, as calls have sometimes being 'lost' for considerable time.

The District Cllr then advised that **Police and Crime Commissioner**, Nick Alston, will be attending a **public meeting** on 13th May 2013 at the Plume School and that the PCC has committed to two such meetings in each district every year; this will be the first in our district with the second meeting being in October 2013 – these meetings are intended to allow the public to have **direct access to the PCC** to discuss issues of concern.

Talking about the **Local Development Plan** District Cllr Ms White advised the timetable as follows:

Spring/Early Summer 2013: Further preferred options consultation

Autumn/Winter 2013: Pre-submission consultation

Early 2014: Submission and examination of Plan

Late 2014: Adoption of final Plan.

In regards to children aged 11 to 16 years Ms White advised that there is a free 10 week course starting in April 2013 to help parents with strategies and processes to deal with **teenagers**.

Finally Ms White advised that she is part of the new **Surface Water Management** Team, so would welcome details of all concerns of this nature.

REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR JOHN ARCHER

District Cllr Archer gave a brief report, firstly advising that there was a 1.9% increase in **Council Tax** – Maldon District Council is being very prudent, but had no alternative this year as reserves cannot be used again this year. Secondly advising that the **Dengie Dart** service operated through Arrow Taxis is continuing to be very successful – Dart 99 and 5 both available through Cold Norton, so providing more 'bus' services for villagers. Lastly District Cllr Archer talked about the '**fishing wars**' on the River Crouch relating to the legal situation of the clams at North Fambridge.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT – COUNTY COUNCILLOR MRS PENNY CHANNER

Cllr Mrs Channer started her report advising that the past year has been a difficult year financially for **public service finances** with public sector finances remaining squeezed and that challenging times remain for all – residents, businesses, as well as for the public sector.

In Essex hard work has been going on to provide the right climate for businesses to grow and create more jobs through the new **Essex County Council Economic Growth Strategy**. Although recent falls in unemployment do provide some positive signs, times remain hard.

To assist residents, the council tax payers, the County Council's share of the tax increase for **2013-2014 is 0%**.

With regards to **children** ECC has delivered much needed improvements to children's social cares services significantly reducing the number of children in care, bucking the national trend. ECC launched a **Social Impact Bond** the first authority in the country to do this. From April 2013, the Bond will fund services focused on vulnerable young people with the aim of providing them and their families with intensive support within stable family environments and keeping the young people out of care. Essex Children are now achieving the same level of 5

A*-C at GCSEs as the national average. Work will continue with **schools** to improve this even further with the aspiration that every young person can attend a school that is either good or outstanding.

Through the **Essex Apprenticeship programme** the Council has supported the creation of over 2,000 apprenticeships. Young people have been helped to get training, skills and work experience that they need to support them into jobs and careers.

The **adult social care services** in Essex have consistently been among the best nationally and people have been empowered with respect to their care through the personal control of their care budgets.

Working with the district, boroughs and city councils across Essex **recycling** rates have increased to well over 50%. This figure is well above the national average.

The condition of Essex **roads** remain in the top quartile and an additional £11M was invested in the current year to repair the damage that was caused by severe weather conditions. Over 40,000 potholes across the county have been repaired and the road network remains a priority in the 2013-14 budget. Around £82 million will be invested in maintaining and enhancing the county's network of over 8,500 miles of roads and footpaths and also an extra £35M will be invested over the next two years regarding the maintenance of the highways.

Three years ago £300M in savings and efficiencies was set as a target. The target is set to be bettered by over £60M by March this year. Savings of £364M include nearly £170M from procurement savings and nearly £15M taken out of management costs.

The Council was selected as one of only four **national pilots** to develop community budget proposals. Working with Essex public, private and voluntary sector partners will result in Essex being at the forefront of public sector reform.

An Essex wide **military** covenant has been signed, showing commitment from public agencies across Essex to work with our armed forces to support their particular needs.

Awards: Corporate Governance arrangements have been strengthened and improved and ECC was short listed for a national award with respect to the new systems in place. ECC won the LGC Award 2013 for Corporate Governance and was highly commended in the Public Sector Partnership Award for the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit. ECC has been awarded the Charter for Member Development and a Local Government Association peer review with respect to Equality and Diversity judged ECC as excellent.

A Local **Enterprise Partnership** of Essex, Southend, Thurrock, Kent, Medway and East Sussex was formed and has already secured an Enterprise Zone in Harlow and secured major funding for major projects in Essex via the Growing Places Fund.

The authority designed and built an **Olympic venue** which hosted the Olympic Mountain Biking event in July 2012 which attracted over 40,000 spectators.

The budget for 2013 -14 is rooted in 5 corporate priorities:

Education - nearly £18M will be invested in providing an additional school places across the county. Increase funding for Home to school transport. Work with Partners to maximise the take up of free early years' entitlement for three and four year old and fulfil the new duty of providing free early education for the most disadvantaged two year olds.

Broadband - £7.7 M will be invested to improve broadband connectivity across the county. This being the first phase of a total of £25M investment in broadband over the next three years.

£2M will be set aside to support economic growth, job creation and the promotion of Essex as a place where business can grow and flourish.

Local Authority Mortgage Scheme - in partnership with the District and Borough Councils to help first time buyers to get on to the property ladder. The scheme will provide a financial guarantee for up to 20% of the loan value with respect to people that cannot afford to take out a mortgage to fund the purchase of their first home.

£7M will be for the Integrated County Strategy in 2013/14 for infrastructure to support economic growth.

The investment and extra investment in the highway network has already been reported earlier.

Accommodation for vulnerable people - £2M will be invested in this. Plus the Social Impact Bond mentioned earlier, from April, will fund a five year programme to provide intensive support to approximately 380 young people and their families.

Health - the budget will resource the transfer of public health responsibilities to local government, focusing on early intervention and supporting people to live healthier lives.

County Cllr Mrs Channer advised that £7M will be invested over 4 years into community initiatives, continuing the success of the **Community Initiatives Fund** and that the budget will ensure that all libraries remain open. ECC is jointly funding the construction and opening of a new library in Springfield with Springfield Parish Council.

To assist the budget position for 2013/14 a one off sum of £25M was taken from the **General Reserve**. Budget pressures will arise in future years due to reduced government funding coupled with demographic pressures and inflation.

Finally County Cllr Mrs Channer advised that the ECC Cabinet had agreed the next phase of the **transformation programme**: the design period will take about six months and the programme itself will be implemented over a three year period, the programme will have five key aims and to drive it forward will involve **radical changes**. It will involve changes to the organisation's structure and to the roles and accountabilities of the Corporate Leadership team.

There were no questions for the District or County Cllrs

VILLAGER OF THE YEAR

This award had been created by the Parish Council in 2011 to recognise services to the village.

Mr Wakeling announced that this year this accolade was to go to Professor Les Barclay for long service to the village and all his work on numerous projects benefitting the village and its residents over more than 40 years.

QUESTIONS

At the end of the reports there was an open session of questions and discussions.

There was just one comment raised, this related to the Old Fire Station and the condition of the fence at the front of the site.

Mrs Gold announced that the village school would be celebrating its centenary in 2014. The School actually opened in January 1914, but centenary celebrations would be held in the summer of 2014.

The meeting was then closed at 9.30pm - all present were invited to stay for refreshments, and advised that the Councillors and Guests would all be available to talk to on an informal basis.

Chairman..... Date.....