



**Cold Norton's Annual Parish Meeting  
Held at 8 pm on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015  
At Cold Norton Village Hall**

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

Mrs. P. Channer, County Councillor  
Ms S White, District Councillor  
Mr A Ambrose, General Manager, Arrow Taxis  
Mrs. M. Dyer (Parish Clerk) and 23 Members of the Public

**WELCOME**

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr Stewart Rivers welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proceedings for the evening.

Mr Rivers then invited Mr Ambrose to speak about the DaRT and Local Transport

**PRESENTATION FROM ANDY AMBROSE, ARROW TAXIS:  
DaRT & LOCAL TRANSPORT**

Mr Ambrose started by stating that it is a difficult time due to increased legislation and rising costs (fuel, admin, pension) and pressure on concessionary fares, plus the threat from the Shadow Transport Minister to nationalise buses by if elected. The first DaRT bus cost £25,000, but now due to legislation and accessibility regulations to replace these buses will now cost in the region of £75,000. New legislation has effect across the bus industry. A few years back Suffolk had to make an overnight cut of 52% of their supported services, but thankfully Essex managed to retain almost all of its front line services, yet still reduce costs.

Mr Ambrose gave thanks to MP John Whittingdale, Cllr Mrs Channer, Cllr Ms White and Cllr Archer for their support in getting the initial DaRT 99 service to Broomfield Hospital launched which subsequently led to a joint partnership between Arrow Taxis and Stephenson's and the launch of DaRT 5 which serves Cold Norton.

Mr Ambrose then went on to talk about the future and plans, pointing out that these cannot be confirmed until after the elections, but advising that the future is in passenger growth, not

subsidy and that the plan is to expand DaRT services with proposals involving both Suffolk and Essex County Councils. On the 'wish list' are new services, including a service from North Fambridge through Cold Norton to Chelmsford, along a similar route of the former 31, which could be a timetabled or non-timetabled service like the DaRT 5, or a mixture of both.

Mr Ambrose finished his presentation by encouraging everyone to participate in the ECC Public Transport Consultation as the outcome of this would determine the strategy of future public transport in the area.

Questions were then invited.

There was just one question regarding bus services to hospitals, in particular to Braintree Hospital from this area – many people are now being referred to Braintree. Mr Ambrose advised that to date there had not been productive communication with Hospital Services regarding a DaRT led service.

Mr Rivers thanked Mr Ambrose, who would be staying to talk to residents at the end of the reports.

Unfortunately the Police were unable to attend this year's APM, but had supplied a short report that Mr Rivers read out.

### **ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE POLICE**

In the last year there have been 123 calls to the Cold Norton area. Along with the reports of the crimes mentioned below, the incidents are of a varying nature including road traffic collisions, civil disputes, domestic disputes and enquiries requested from other forces.

There have been a total of 28 crimes, 1 more than the previous year;

7 Thefts  
6 Criminal Damages  
2 Thefts of motor vehicles  
5 Burglary Others (shed or outbuilding burglary)

### **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence – all Councillors were present

### **THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2014**

Cllr Mr Wakeling proposed that these be approved, Cllr Archer seconded the proposal, which were then duly signed as a correct record by Cllr Mr Rivers

### **THE PARISH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT BY CHAIRMAN MR STEWART RIVERS**

Mr. Rivers started his report by introducing the current **Parish Councillors**: Les Barclay, Philip Wakeling, Sue Garnham, John Archer, Charles Litscher, Von Jennings, and himself Stewart Rivers, and the Parish Clerk, Mrs Maria Dyer, thanking them and the Clerk for all their work and support. Mr River advised that the Parish Council meets monthly, except August, on the first Wednesday of the month and that all meetings are open to the public, but are not public meetings.

Regarding **finance** Mr Rivers advised that at year end there was £24,878.23 in the Parish Council account, with a large proportion of that figure earmarked for projects, including the toilets and solar panels. This year's **precept** was set at £24,700 an increase of £1,700, but this equates to a very small increase to each household. The precept covers a whole range of tasks such as providing street lighting, grass cutting in public areas of the village and the village hall loans.

Moving onto **planning applications** Mr Rivers advised that the Parish Council's decisions are based on what village residents wanted per the 2011 Village Survey. Mr Rivers reminded residents that whilst Cold Norton Parish Council submits a viewpoint, Maldon District Council makes the final decision. In the year from April 2014 to March 2015 the Parish Council considered 26 planning applications – a decrease of 17 over the previous year. Of these 26, Cold Norton PC did not comment on 4 applications and for one application further information is awaited so this will go into next year. Of the 21 the Parish Council commented on there were no objections to 12 applications but the Parish Council objected to 9. Of these 21 MDC have made decisions on 19 so far – 15 of these MDC agreed with the Parish Council's view, and 4 MDC disagreed with the Parish Council's opinion. Two decisions are still awaited.

Regarding **Highway Matters** the Chairman advised that highways issues such as flooding, potholes etc. are referred to Essex County Council Highways Department; the Parish Council is responsible for the street lights in the village.

**The Village Hall** – works to the **toilets** have now finished, now completing the major Village Hall project from 2010. **Solar Panels** have now been installed and whilst the Parish Council had to take out a Public Works Loan to finance the installation, the tariff paid back from 'selling electricity to the National Grid' will cover the annual repayments. Mr Rivers thanked the Members of the Village Hall Management Committee for all their work and asked for residents to come forward to join the VHMC.

Next topic covered was **vandalism**, which thankfully Mr Rivers was able to report was down this year and confined to glass littering and some graffiti. At this point Mr Rivers thanked Carole Kirk in her role as **Neighbourhood Watch** Co-ordinator for passing on relevant information to keep residents vigilant.

Mr Rivers then thanked the Village Caretaker, Mr Roy 'Whizz' Wiseman and Cllr Charles Litscher for ensuring that **Cowpiece Nature Reserve** continues to be an asset for the village. Mr Wiseman was also thanked for all his work around the village including the areas around the play equipment on the playing fields, and regular litter picks around the village.

Next Mr Rivers reminded those present that copies of the **Cold Norton Footpaths Map** are still available via the Clerk and advised that Cllrs Mrs Sue Garnham and Mr Litscher are currently undertaking a **ditch survey** in conjunction with ECC, which should prove useful in relation to flooding issues. The **web site** would be renewed as soon as possible. **Salt bags** had again been supplied by ECC for use in inclement weather.

Mr Rivers then went on to thank Sue Garnham, Chris Edwards and Von Jennings for all their time and hard work in setting up and running the Seniors **Coffee Mornings and Lunch Club** – this was being well attended, providing a meeting time every two weeks for residents to enjoy an informal get together for chat, a quiz, a raffle and tea and biscuits.

To finish off his report Mr Rivers paid tribute to **Les Barclay** – a Parish Councillor for Cold Norton for 45 years and announced that in his honour and to formally acknowledge and thank Les for all he had done and achieved for the village that The Norton Meeting Room was being renamed The Les Barclay Room. Les would not be standing in the May Parish Council elections as he and his wife, Janet would be moving out of the area – they were both wished Good Luck in their new home in Yorkshire

## **REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MS SUE WHITE**

District Cllr Ms White started her report talking about the **Local Development Plan (LDP)**, that this is going through the due process and that the Inspectors Report was expected on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015 and advised that **MDC's Corporate Plan** for 2015 to 2019 had now been approved. In regards to **Stow Maries Aerodrome** the Trustees had secured a £1.3M grant fund for a new hangar and had had a visit from Prince Edward. Ms White confirmed that **The Norton Community Pub** was now registered as a Community Asset.

Ms White announced that **Essex Police Messaging Service** was now live and residents could sign up for free updates and specify local or county wide reports.

Cllr Ms White advised that she is our representative on the **Essex Flood Management Team** and stated that it is very important that landowners keep ditches clear to prevent flooding.

## **COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT – COUNTY COUNCILLOR MRS PENNY CHANNER**

Starting with finance, Cllr Mrs Channer advised that **ECC Finances** were based on a stable budget to benefit all residents to ensure frontline services are maintained while tackling major reductions in grants from Central Government, applying responsible financial management which puts family and community first. People are living longer; therefore there is an ageing population which puts stress on local services. But to help prepare for this ECC has saved over £450M over the past four years and is on track to save a further £100M in the current year. There will be over £2 billion spent on public services for the 1.4 million people of Essex. The ECC Council Tax has been frozen for the fifth year.

**Unemployment** – Cllr Mrs Channer was pleased to report that this has reduced in Essex.

The **budget** agreed by the Council will be spent on roads, schools, broadband, plus waste and recycling: £130M on highways, £200M on schools, £23M on flood defences and £1.5M will go to support vulnerable people including food banks - one goal of ECC is to make a significant reduction to children living in poverty.

**The future** - plans are being formulated that through ECC's continuing innovations and financial discipline over five years to achieve £1 billion to then be made available to use for the issues that matter most to people – better roads, more school places, and protection from flooding.

In conclusion Cllr Mrs Channer advised that **Street Lighting** is now being turned off between 1am and 5am to benefit commuters and that the Council has awarded over £3M in grants for projects delivered by the voluntary sector.

## **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

At the end of the reports questions/comments were invited:

The following topics were raised and discussed, below is a brief summary of the discussions:

**Broadband:** Cllr Mrs Channer advised that Phase 1 is now rolling out, providing 2Mb for residents; Phase 2 will give coverage across 95% of Essex. Cllr Mrs Channer encouraged all present to view the updates on Superfast Essex on the website. Cllr Professor Barclay reported back on Broadband meeting he had attended on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and reminded residents that when BT does provide fibre to the 'green cabinets' it will be up to service providers to connect them. Phase 2 – contract not yet awarded, decision will be made in

May. There is not enough money to do the whole County – the decision on who is to get Broadband is based on the number of people from each village who participate in the survey, so Cllr Mrs Channer encouraged Cold Norton residents to participate. At the moment both Cold Norton and Purleigh were both low down the priority list.

**Hagg Hill:** Cllr Ms White advised that some work had been done along this road and ditches had been dug out.

**Power Cuts:** power cuts are an issue in the village, with ‘switching gear’ being the problem.

**School Parking Issue:** continues to be a problem; the Police are making occasional visits, but unable to use Rangers as there are no parking restrictions (e.g. yellow lines) in force that they can act on. The issue would be raised again with the Police

**Old Fire Station Fencing:** it was noted that whilst new fencing had been installed the site was still an ‘eyesore’ – PC to refer the matter to MDC Enforcement.

### **VILLAGER OF THE YEAR**

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

Mr Rivers announced that this year the award was being made to Chris Edwards for all her work on the Village Hall Management Committee and The Norton Community Pub and more recently helping to run the Seniors coffee mornings and producing delicious lunches for the Seniors Lunch Club. *(Unfortunately Mrs Edwards couldn't attend the APM so was presented with the Villager of the Year shield at a seniors coffee morning.)*

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The meeting was closed at 9.10pm - 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. Mrs Elaine Hampton and her team were thanked for providing the refreshments.

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