



**Cold Norton's Annual Parish Meeting
Held at 8 pm on Wednesday 31st May 2017
At Cold Norton Village Hall**

THOSE PRESENT: Parish Councillors:
Mr J Archer
Mrs S Garnham
Mrs V Jennings
Mr S Rivers (Chairman)
Mr P Wakeling (Vice Chairman)

Mrs. P. Channer, County Councillor
Ms S White, District Councillor
Ms Lucy Dickinson, Senior Communications Manager, ECC Superfast
Mrs. M. Dyer (Parish Clerk) and 34 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.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Charles Litscher and Brian Haydon

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 12TH APRIL 2016

Cllr Wakeling proposed that these be approved; Mrs Sue Garnham seconded the proposal, these were then duly signed as a correct record by Cllr Rivers.

Mr Rivers then invited Ms Lucy Dickinson from ECC Superfast to talk about Broadband.

SUPERFAST ESSEX UPDATE

Ms Dickinson gave a slide presentation and advised residents that the presentation would be available from the Clerk and from the Superfast Essex Office.

Ms Dickinson started by talking about the programme in general, advising that Superfast is using public subsidy to accelerate superfast broadband deployment and that, whilst not a statutory obligation, ECC has made investment in broadband a priority. The Essex programme began in 2012/13 and is expected to continue until 2019/20 reaching at least 97% superfast by 2020, thereby helping economic growth and improving the quality of life for residents. Ms Dickinson stressed that 'state aid' is limited to areas that do not have access

to feed into a service provided by Network Providers (i.e. commercial enterprises e.g. County Broadband). BT Phase 1 reached 65,000 homes and businesses and finished on June 2016 and Phase 2 is on track to reach 120,000 homes by 2019. Parts of Cold Norton are included in Phase 2 plans with Purleigh 1 due for upgrade by June 2019 and some alternative work (not a standard cabinet upgrade) also planned by 2019.

Ms Dickinson went on to explain more about the criteria for 'state aid' investment and the interactive mapping system of eligibility and advised that wireless network operator County Broadband has claimed it can serve one third of all properties in the Cold Norton Parish. Superfast Essex is reviewing this broadband claim and Ms Dickinson requested feedback from the community about County Broadband coverage and to register demand on the 'Make our Connection' Survey on the Superfast Essex web site. Some figures were given in relation to work in Cold Norton: completed under Phase 1: 3% coverage; planned work under Phase 2: 61% coverage. A map was then shown to show where in Cold Norton Superfast speeds are now available, homes planned under Phase 2, homes under 'commercial review' and those not in the current plans.

Questions/Comments were then invited: the first related to issues with County Broadband – residents were encouraged to submit details of issues to the Superfast web site. The second was a comment with the problem with the more people using the system the more it 'suffers'; the third related to Victoria Road and that it is a mix of 'dots' – some properties covered under Phase 2 and some under 'commercial review' – Ms Dickinson responded that some are eligible as within the 'Purleigh 1' range.

Ms Dickinson concluded by again stressing residents go on the Superfast web site to register 'demand'

Mr Rivers thanked Ms Dickinson for coming to the meeting.

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

Mr. Rivers started his report by talking about **planning applications**: reporting that in the year from April 2016 to March 2017 the Parish Council had considered 37 planning applications (34 in the previous year) of these 37, Cold Norton PC had not objected to 29 applications, recommended refusal to 6 applications and did not submit a view on 2. Of the 35 the PC submitted comments on, MDC agreed with the Parish Council's view for 25 but disagreed on 10.

In regards to **finance** Mr Rivers advised that the precept for the year commencing 1st April 2017 had been set at £25,000 to accommodate an increase in the planned reserve and additional costs and whilst this was an increase of £2,839 over last year's precept, the precept for 2016-2017 showed a £2,539 reduction over 2015-2016. Refurbishment works had been carried out on the play equipment including replenishment of the bark in the younger children's area and a double sided kick wall had been installed. The solar panels installed on the village hall roof were producing an 'income' for the Parish Council and a reduction in power costs for the village hall.

Regarding **Highway Matters** the Chairman advised that speeding through the village continues to be a problem; a minimum of 10 volunteers are needed to start a village speed watch group. 30mph stickers had been purchased for residents along Latchingdon Road and St Stephens Road to attach to 'wheelie bins' to remind motorists of the speed limit. 'School' parking is still an issue and parents are urged to park sensibly. Dog fouling is also still an issue.

The Seniors **Coffee Mornings** continues to be popular and raise funds towards the running costs of the village hall. Mr Rivers thanked the small team of volunteers who make up the Village Hall Management Committee for all their hard work and dedication – without whom the village hall wouldn't be available for village activities, clubs and social events.

Mr Rivers concluded by thanking his fellow **Parish Councillors** present, namely: Philip Wakeling, Sue Garnham, Von Jennings and John Archer, and also Charles Litscher and Brian Haydon who were unable to attend this evening, for all for their work and support; Mr Rivers also thanked the Parish Clerk, Mrs Maria Dyer, who is contracted to work 12 hours a week for the Parish Council. And finally assured residents that the Parish Council continues to be frugal with parish funds. Questions were then invited, but there were none.

The next person to speak was District Cllr Ms Sue White

REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MS SUE WHITE

Regarding **planning** matters, District Cllr Ms White advised that the new Director of Planning was Simon Rowberry and that a decision re the Local Development Plan (LDP) was expected in the next few months. **Maldon** featured No.23 in the top 50 of the Halifax 2017 'Best Rural Quality of Life Places to Live in the UK' and there has been a 3.9% increase in the number of day trips to the district. **Walking Rugby** is being offered as a new sport in the district starting on 3rd June 2017.

There was one question put to Ms White in relation to the delay to the **LDP**: Ms White advised one issue was in connection to Gypsies and Travellers, but this has now been modified and that she believed things are now well advanced. She added that there are no major developments specified for Cold Norton

County Cllr Mrs Penny Channer was then introduced.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT – COUNTY COUNCILLOR MRS PENNY CHANNER

County Cllr Mrs Channer started by talking about **ECC Finances** advising that there continues to be constraints on ECC, with a £44million reduction in the Government Revenue Support Grant for 2017/18. ECC plans to save £106million by the end of 2017/18. Whilst it was agreed at the ECC budget meeting to not increase the Core Council Tax at all, resources are needed for adult social care and the predicted growth in the number of people over 85 needing care. Therefore in line with authority from the Government, ECC will be adding a '**Social Care Levy**' onto the Council Tax, equating to 65p per a week/£34 per year for an average Band D property; this means the Council will be able to continue to support the vulnerable people in our communities.

Even with the reduction in funding from central government, the **budget** agreed by ECC will allow spending of: £524m on adult social care; £127m on children and families; £668m on education and lifelong learning; £233m on highways, infrastructure and public transport and £92m on health. The budget also allows the authority to invest to deliver **four priorities** for Essex, namely: economic growth, enabling people to live as independently as possible, helping create great places to live and work and sustainable public services.

Mrs Channer highlighted that more joined up public services meant that real differences had been made to how the Council and others operate. One good example of this is the library service – by turning libraries into **community hubs** ECC had brought together services across local government, health and the police, tailored to local needs. With the result that library visits increased from 2million in 2015 to 2.25million in 2016.

Street Lights – a £9.2million programme upgrading 19,000 street lights to LED started in 2016 will result in savings in energy costs and carbon tax costs.

ECC has launched an **Independent Living Programme** to allow older people to live independently in self-contained housing with access to 24 hour care and onsite support rather than in residential care homes. ECC is now working with all the District Councils to find suitable land for this housing.

Tackling **homelessness** is another priority for ECC – being part of the 28 local authorities chosen by the Government to be part of the network of homeless prevention ‘trailblazers’ – helping people before they lose their homes.

Children – Essex schools continue to improve against the national average and the County enjoyed its best ever educational performance as reported in Ofsted’s Annual Report. More **Foster Carers** are still needed to cope with the arrival of more unaccompanied asylum seeking children. **Young adults** – fewer young people unemployed in Essex, due to the Employability & Skills Unit and the Apprenticeships now available.

Highways – following on from previous improvements to Essex’s main roads additional funding was allocated to repair more than 3,200 **potholes** from July to December 2016. The Government has announced an extra £1,869,000 for Essex from the national Pothole Action Fund for 2017/18. Together with a record programme in the Summer of 2016 of road surface dressing only 2% priority routes require maintenance.

Mrs Channer then invited questions:

There were two – both road/traffic based: firstly **speed cameras**: Ms Channer explained that these have to be applied for through the Local Highways Panel (LHP) and that Adam Pipe and his team may be able to assist with speed checks. (At this point Mr Rivers reminded residents that to set up a village Speed Watch local volunteers are needed). The second question raised related to **speed limit** of the short stretch of Stow Road which is 40mph – ‘sandwiched’ by 30mph in Cold Norton on one side and into Stow Maries on the other. ‘Gateways’ were mentioned – in some areas these have proved successful in highlighting a change in speed.

The Police were unable to send a representative, but had provided a report, which was read out by Mr Rivers

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE POLICE

“Coverage remains much the same. There is still 24/7 Policing based at Maldon which covers the whole district. There is a plan to move the Policing base from the Police Station into Maldon District Council sometime late summer. Building works are currently underway to adapt some offices for Police use.

Cold Norton is one of the safest areas within a safe district overall.

We have recently fallen victim to Dwelling Burglaries in rural areas however and would ask for vigilance. We would welcome reports of suspicious vehicles. If someone knocks at the door and it doesn’t seem right, phone us. A tactic burglars use will be to knock at the door to see if anyone is in. If you answer they will seem out of place. Keep an eye on your neighbour’s house, any strange vehicle nearby or persons that look out of place going to the door, phone us.

We run a district facebook page – ‘Essex Police – Chelmsford and Maldon’ which is a good place to look out for local crime concerns and information on Police activity locally. Please promote this asking people to ‘like’ the page.

Although we cannot attend Parish meetings as we once did, we welcome feedback from them.”

Mr Rivers advised that from Police meetings he had recently attended, **digital crime** is on the increase and that the Police will be directing time towards that and in relation to children on line. Mrs Channer added that Maldon District Council will be attending the Police & Crime

Panel meetings and will take issues to these panels. Mrs Channer also advised that more officers may be allocated to this area.

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 **Sue Garnham** for being instrumental in setting up and helping to run the Seniors coffee mornings, lunch club, exercise class and carpet bowls club, as well as being part of the small team that manages the Village Hall.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

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

Two questions were raised, both referring to **public transport**: the first was in relation to bus services and are there any plans for any new services through Cold Norton. Mr Rivers said he would raise this at the next Public Transport meeting. The second question was how to get to South Woodham Ferrers and the response was that this journey can be 'ordered' through the 'Dial & Ride' service.

The meeting was closed at 9.20pm. Mr Rivers invited all present to stay for refreshments, kindly being served by the two Margaret Taylors, who were duly thanked. Residents were advised that the Councillors would all be available to talk to on an informal basis during this time.

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