



**Cold Norton's Annual Parish Meeting
Held at 8 pm on Wednesday 25th April 2018
At Cold Norton Village Hall**

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

Cllr Ms S White, District Councillor
Mrs. M. Dyer (Parish Clerk) and 27 Members of the Public

WELCOME

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr Philip Wakeling welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proceedings for the evening, inviting residents to stay at the end for refreshments and with the opportunity to talk to Cllrs informally.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from County Cllr Mrs Penny Channer.

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 31st May 2017

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

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

Mr Wakeling began by thanking **Mr Charles Litscher** for his time as a Parish Councillor, acknowledging the vast amount of practical work Charles had also undertaken in the village alongside the work involved in being a Parish Councillor since 2003. Charles would be missed by all his colleagues on the Parish Council. Mr Wakeling also thanked his fellow Councillors and the Clerk for their work over the past year.

With reference to **planning applications**, Mr Wakeling reported that in the year from April 2017 to March 2018 the Parish Council had considered 41 planning applications (37 in the previous year) of these 41, Cold Norton PC had submitted comments on 29 (the other 12 were a mix of 6 'For Information Only' applications, 5 the PC meeting had been cancelled and the next meeting was too late for a response and 1 was a technical issue which the PC

did not feel qualified to comment on). Of the 29 the PC submitted a view on CNPC had not objected to/recommended approval of 24 applications and recommended refusal for 5 applications. MDC were in agreement with 21 recommendations made by Cold Norton PC, did not agree with 7 views submitted by the Parish Council and one application relating to Stow Maries Aerodrome is not decided yet.

There is a summary of all applications on display.

In regards to **finance** Mr Wakeling advised that the precept for the year commencing April 2018 was set at £27,000 (i.e. £55 for Band D) - an increase of £2,000 over last year's precept in order to maintain the increase in the planned reserve and to start 'saving' towards major works to the playground – which Mrs Sue Garnham and Mr Brian Haydon will speak about shortly. In terms of expenditure in the previous year residents can see a breakdown of costs displayed. Due to not having a Village Caretaker this budget category spend is down, with maintenance and gardening jobs carried out by contractors showing up under the 'maintenance' budget. Works to trees by Three Ashes Corner and the village hall have been undertaken totalling £745; shingle has been installed in the well-used back walkway from the bridge to Ferris Avenue and Station Crescent. The village hall roof had been cause for concern but the issue has now been resolved, but incurred a cost of £1,100. Street light maintenance costs are up this year, but that is a difficult one to predict - costs for LED lights will be investigated this year. On the plus side the solar panels on the village hall roof continue to produce an income in excess of the public works loan payments – profit of £168.65 this financial year and a reduction in power costs for the village hall.

Moving onto **Highway Matters** the Chairman advised that PC continues to report issues relating to pot holes, footways and public rights of ways issues (vegetation, broken signs etc.), but there are strict, very tight rules governing what qualifies for works to be carried out. We are grateful to Penny Channer for her support with highways issues. Speeding is still an issue along Latchingdon Road and St Stephens Road – all houses have now been issued with a 30mph or 40mph sticker as applicable to apply to wheelie bins. Whilst not totally resolved (unfortunately there have been some unpleasant incidences), parking by parents dropping off/collecting at the school seems now to be less of an issue, since cones were introduced opposite the school and more parents are parking at the village hall; the PC is continuing to work together with the school on this issue.

Regarding the **Post office** closure, due to lack of business, Mr Wakeling advised that it is still hoped that some sort of mobile service will be brought to the village on a regular basis, probably at the village hall – will keep you informed. The **New Parish Council website** will be launched shortly – apologies for the delay with this. The Chairman reminded residents that **plastic recycling and food bags** can be collected at the coffee mornings held fortnightly at the village hall and advised that whilst the **Mobile Library** service had been stopped in St Stephens Road, it would continue on a three weekly basis at the village hall. No **police** report was available, but Mr Wakeling advised that any information received at a later stage would be included in The Beacon.

Mr Wakeling then thanked the **Village Hall Management Committee**, who had held their Annual General Meeting prior to this meeting, for all their hard work running the village hall, advising that the committee is a very small group of dedicated people, who keep the hall looking good and financially viable.

Mr Wakeling then handed over to Mrs Sue Garnham and Mr Brian Haydon to talk about:

Village Hall Car Park and Playing Field Project

Residents were advised that this project has come about as, whilst the Village Hall is an excellent large, modern, fully equipped facility, which is well used weekdays, it has potential to be used more at weekends for weddings and other larger events, but is 'hampered' by the

fact that the car park is not large enough and needs to be resurfaced. Mrs Garnham has met with Maldon and District CVS (Community Voluntary Service) who are helping with ideas and funding opportunities. The plan is to move the existing play equipment, adding equipment suitable for older children and an outdoor gym (suitable for both adults and children) and then extending the car park into the playing field where the play equipment is at the moment.

For this project to succeed village support is needed – in order to be successful in grant applications we need to show that village residents are in agreement and support the scheme. To ‘evidence’ this support there will be a questionnaire issued to all residents to complete and return. Residents present at this meeting were requested to encourage their neighbours to fill in and return the questionnaires. This will be a costly project and whilst grants will be applied for, fund raising within the village will be needed.

Residents were advised that there are plans of the project to view today at the back of the hall – this is an exciting initiative for all ages in the village.

Mr Wakeling then introduced District Cllr Ms Sue White

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT –DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MS SUE WHITE

District Cllr Ms White started by stating that she is one of the two District Councillors for the Purleigh Ward, the other being Cllr John Archer.

Ms White then gave a brief update about matters at Maldon District Council (MDC), advising that MDC has appointed a new **Director of Planning**; there will be **Multi Agency Meetings** held at MDC offices for members of the public to come and discuss a variety of problems all at the one meeting – the first these meetings will be in June. Residents are being encouraged to **recycle metals**. There will be **12 new police officers** covering the Chelmsford & Maldon division. Whilst there has been a 6% increase in crime this area, this is half of the increase experienced in Essex as a whole. It is recognised that the Police need to be trained to tackle rural crime. MDC is now operating **TRUCAM** (speed detection) which is proving a very successful operation e.g. 17 incidences of **speeding** caught by TRUCAM in 10 minutes. There is to be a special ‘stay safe’ event at Maldon Fire Station for **young drivers**. The Maldon area came 25th in a recent Halifax survey on the **best area to live**.

Ms White concluded by offering to help residents with any issues.

Mr Wakeling thanked Ms White for attending tonight and for attending most Cold Norton Parish Council meetings.

As County Cllr Mrs Penny Channer was unable to attend, Mr Wakeling then read out a report supplied by Mrs Channer.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT – COUNTY COUNCILLOR MRS PENNY CHANNER

The 2017/18 year saw a **funding reduction** of £44M from Government through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), with the RSG planned to be phased out completely by 2020, to be replaced by business rate retention.

ECC kept Council Tax low so supporting all our residents. Implementation of the **3% Social Care Levy** raised an extra £17 million which supported the most vulnerable. The 2017/18 budget allowed for spend of £524m on **adult social care**, our greatest pressure.

In July 2017 a **masterplan** that will guide Essex County Council’s work over the next four years and drive prosperity for everyone was approved at Full Council. The Organisation

Strategy, which will help the Council deliver its ambitions by 2021 as it bids to become the nation's best local authority and a digital leader, is underpinned by **four key principles**:

1. Enable inclusive economic growth
2. Help people to get the best start and age well
3. Help to create great places to grow up, live and work.
4. Transform the council to achieve more with less

Fostering economic growth will improve not only the living standards of people in Essex but also their **health and wellbeing**, opportunities and life chances.

Helping People get the best start and **age well**. ECC has a critical role to safeguard and support the most vulnerable people in the county. One fifth of Essex's population (20%) is over 65 and this is projected to rise to 32% by 2030. With demand for services growing faster than income, especially in adult social care, we need to **help people to help themselves**, and make the best choices, working with communities and the NHS to achieve change. Also, our ambition is for all **schools** to be 'good' or 'outstanding'.

Investing in infrastructure will support great places to grow up in, live and work and the focus will be on building new communities where people can live, work and play, not dormitory towns. Great places are the products of their people and communities, supported by good public services, a thriving voluntary sector and private enterprise.

Transform the Council to achieve more with less. To deliver our priorities and maximise our positive contribution to all in Essex, we need to continue to develop as a proactive, efficient and effective organisation. As a public body it is important that we spend taxpayer's money wisely, on matters that are important for our residents. To offset **reductions in government funding**, we must constantly manage demand, reshape, and reimagine services and look for opportunities to generate income. It is also imperative that we work to secure investment into Essex to make our county an even better place to work and live.

In February 2018 Full Council agreed the budget for 2018/19. Local Government finances remain constrained and the funding from Government through the RSG was reduced by a further £28M. At the same time demand for many services continues to grow. However, the **financial management** of the Council is strong and will remain so and despite the issues and our pressures the Council has made excellent progress with the delivery of its objectives.

In the last year, we have: Seen 94% of **Essex schools** judged good or outstanding - three points higher than the national average and created over 2,500 additional school places; Signed over a hundred good causes up to receive funding from the Essex lottery; Helped 1,330 **young people** not in education, employment or training to move into employment or learning; Reduced the amount of **household waste** over the last 12 months by 32kg per household; Continued to invest in our **country parks** which has increased visitor numbers by 7.5% to almost three qtrs. of a million; Resurfaced over 400 miles of **roads** – nearly 4 times around the M25 – and filled in 5,000 potholes.

As well as all of this, we have an outstanding track record of ensuring value for tax-paying residents.

We have delivered £350m of **savings** in the last 4 years by driving out inefficiency, innovating, generating income and reducing costs. And will continue to do so

This track record has enabled the Council not only to maintain services in new and improved ways at lower cost, but also to **invest for the future** so that Essex is a better place in which to live and work.

Mr Wakeling went onto to thank Mrs Channer for her regular attendance at Parish council meetings and her help on highways matters.

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 the award was being made to **Mrs Margaret Taylor** for her services over many years to the Church, for delivering the village magazine, The Beacon, collecting for the VH 100 Club and for being a good neighbour in the widest sense.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

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

Four issues were raised; the first was from a resident in Latchingdon Road, pointing out the lack of footway near his home which necessitates him to have to cross the road twice before reaching the bridge. The second was from a regular attendee at village hall classes, asking if something could be done to stop non hall users parking in the car park, as often class members can't park in the car park. The third issue raised was recycling and why metal recycling is included in the 'pink bags'. The final issue was the road surface in Cherry Blossom Lane. District Cllr Ms White offered to find out about the metal recycling, the other items would be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

The meeting was closed at 8.40pm. Mr Wakeling invited all present to stay for refreshments, kindly being served by Mrs Chris Hawes and Mrs Margaret Taylor, 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.....