



Cold Norton's Annual Parish Meeting
Held at 8 pm on Wednesday 29th May 2019
At Cold Norton Village Hall

THOSE PRESENT: Parish Councillors:

Cllr Mrs S Garnham
Cllr B Haydon
Cllr A Romang
Cllr P Wakeling (Chairman)

Cllr Ms S White, District Councillor
Cllr Mrs J Fleming, District Councillor
Mrs. M. Dyer (Parish Clerk) and 12 Members of the Public

WELCOME

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr 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. Cllr Wakeling advised that the Parish Council is made up of seven members, but that at the recent elections there were only three residents elected, namely Brian Haydon, Alex Romang and Philip Wakeling and Sue Garnham has now been co-opted on, so there are currently three vacancies. Cllr Wakeling invited anyone who is interested in joining the Parish Council to speak to any of the Cllrs or the Clerk after the meeting or to come along to the next meeting.

Cllr Wakeling then thanked the three members who had not stood for election this time, namely John Archer, Stewart Rivers and Von Jennings, for their time, commitment and hard work whilst on the Parish Council.

Cllr Wakeling then spoke about Charles Litscher, who had very sadly passed away. Prior to becoming ill, Mr Litscher had been a highly active Parish Councillor for 15 years, always contributing to the decision-making process with his very practical, down to earth point of view – expressing clear views on what was needed to be done around the village; he was always ready to roll up his sleeves and lend a hand and made a major contribution to the village in a wide variety of ways - from all his hard work at Cowpiece and in the playing field for the benefit of the village children to being instrumental in the set-up of the Winter Salt Scheme. Mr Litscher will be greatly missed by Parish Cllrs and residents alike.

APOLOGIES

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

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 25th April 2018.

Cllr Haydon proposed that these be approved; Cllr Romang 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

Cllr Wakeling started his report with the topic of **finance** advising that the precept for the year commencing April 2019 had been set at £27,700 (i.e. £57 for Band D) - an increase of £700 (2.6%) over last year's precept in order to maintain the increase in the planned reserve of £7,500 and to continue 'saving' towards major works to the playing field and car park project – which Mrs Sue Garnham and Mr Brian Haydon would be speaking about shortly. £1,642 was still held 'in the bank' from the village hall toilet; £2,725 had been spent on works to Cherry Blossom Lane and £500 so far had been received from residents towards this expenditure; £2,200 has been put into the budget to change 6 of the 21 streetlights that the Parish Council is responsible for to more efficient LED. Three years ago, solar panels were installed at the village hall and this past year they have 'earned' an income of £1,100. Other 'regular' items of expenditure include grass cutting, inspections, street lighting PWLB (public works loans) and administration. Cllr Wakeling advised that a breakdown of spending etc. was available to review at the back of the hall.

With reference to **planning applications**, Mr Wakeling reported that in the year from April 2018 to March 2019 the Parish Council had considered 55 planning applications (41 in the previous year) of these 55, Cold Norton PC had submitted comments on 47 (the other 12 were a mix of "for information only"/withdrawn). Of the 47 the PC submitted a view on CNPC had not objected to/recommended approval of 36 applications and recommended refusal for 11 applications. MDC agreed with 31 recommendations made by Cold Norton PC but did not agree with 16 views submitted by the Parish Council. Cllr Wakeling reminded residents that regarding planning applications the Parish Council acts in an advisory capacity/consultee but does not make the final decision. The Parish Council relies on the District Cllrs to put across the PC view. The Parish Council's planning policy is guided by the results of the village survey where residents expressed the view that they wanted the open rural aspect of the village retained.

There is a summary of all applications on display.

Moving onto **Highway Matters** the Chairman spoke about the three major road issues ,two of which should not have been scheduled at the same time as they were causing major issues for people in the Dengie, namely Maldon and the new housing development, but that at least 2 way traffic was now in operation along Fambridge Road; the creation of the new roundabout at Hullbridge Road in South Woodham Ferrers being installed for the new medical centre and Sainsburys; the third issue is the bridge works in Mundon were also causing problems, but these works are necessary for safety reasons and are expected to be completed by Autumn 2019. The Parish Council is lobbying District and County Cllrs for an answer re the planning co-ordination between County and District. The footway to Country Produce is still an issue and the PC continues to press ECC for works to be undertaken. Cllr Wakeling advised that there are still some 30mph and 40mph wheelie bin stickers available for those residents living on Latchingdon Road.

Regarding open spaces the Parish Council manages the maintenance of the **playing field** and **Cowpiece** – grass cutting etc and recently the dipping platform at Cowpiece had been renovated. The **play equipment** is checked weekly by the villager caretaker and an annual independent inspection is made – the report from the latest is expected shortly. **Footpaths** (PRoW – public rights of way) are the responsibility of ECC and the PC works with ECC reporting matters that need attention – recent works include improvements to signage, cutting back and surfacing.

Cllr Wakeling then spoke briefly re the **Housing Needs Survey** that will be undertaken through the RCCE (Rural Community Council of Essex) to ascertain if there is a need for low cost/smaller homes in the village. Cllr Wakeling thanked the **Village Caretaker** for all his work around the village.

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 small group of dedicated people, who keep the hall looking good and financially viable.

Cllr Wakeling finished his report by reminding residents that the PC meets the first Wednesday of the month (except August) and that members of the public are very welcome to attend meetings.

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

VILLAGE HALL CAR PARK & PLAYING FIELD PROJECT

Residents were advised that the current car park is not big enough for village hall users, so needs to be extended and that the current offering of play equipment is small and old. The plan is to install a fitness trail, which could be used by all ages – children and adults, and new play equipment – on display tonight is a plan of what is proposed. This is a long-term project. It is estimated that the approximate cost will be £150,000.

We need to raise money to show commitment when applying for grants. So far with events run specifically for this project £1,000 has been raised; thanks are extended to Carole Kirk and Tanya Wiseman for the money they raised by doing the Maldon Mud Race. The VPMC has started a 'Penny for the Park' jar and so far, £100 has been donated via this jar.

Mr Wakeling then introduced District Cllrs Ms Sue White & Mrs Fleming

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT – DISTRICT COUNCILLORS MS SUE WHITE & MRS FLEMING

District Cllr Ms White started by thanking residents for their support at the recent **elections** and thanked **John Archer** for his many years as a District Cllr – Mr Archer had not stood for re-election this time as he had decided to retire from public life. District Cllr Ms White then introduced **District Cllr Mrs Jane Fleming** who had been elected to the Purleigh District and would speak later.

District Cllr Ms White then gave a brief update about matters at Maldon District Council (MDC), advising that there had been a change to the **hierarchy at MDC** – there are now just three directors, which means that Cllrs have more interaction in matters - with this reduction in numbers/costs the council should remain in the 'black'.

Turning to **roads** District Cllr Ms White advised that these are the responsibility of ECC, but confirmed that she had spoken to Cllr Kevin Bentley (ECC Cabinet Member for Infrastructure) about the issues with roads that Cllr Philip Wakeling had spoken about earlier and the effect it had had on travel in this area.

District Cllr Ms White advised that under the new regime she had been appointed Chairman of **Community Services Committee**, which includes responsibility for cemeteries, rubbish and open space.

District Cllr Ms White then gave a brief explanation on the process re **appeals** in relation to planning matters. She then finished by outlining details of a one-year pilot scheme '**Handy Person Scheme**', whereby residents can come to MDC for fixed prices for certain jobs such

as installation of a grab rail or clearing a path – this will not be means tested, so anyone can access the service.

District Cllr Ms White then handed over to District Cllr Mrs Fleming

District Cllr Mrs Fleming advised that she has only been elected to post but has been appointed to serve on the **Planning & Licensing** Committee and **Finance & Corporate Services** Committee.

District Cllr Mrs Fleming invited residents to email her if they had any issues.

Mr Wakeling thanked District Cllrs Ms White & Mrs Fleming for attending tonight, thanked District Cllr Ms White for attending most Cold Norton Parish Council meetings and looked forward to welcoming District Cllr Mrs Fleming to future CNPC 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 2018/19 - COUNTY COUNCILLOR MRS PENNY CHANNER

The County Council exists to secure the economic, social and environmental well-being of Essex.

Despite the difficult circumstances of a challenging financial environment the Council did not step away from the aims it set itself a year ago because the Members believe they were and still remain the key to Essex's long-term well-being. And however difficult the circumstances we should never stop being ambitious for this great county and the residents of Essex that we serve.

The aims reflected the Members' focus on those larger ambitions that our residents have for themselves – a great education, a good job, a healthy life, a safe community, a stimulating environment to live, work, and enjoy into old age:

- a. Inclusive economic growth – we believe the only guarantee of long-term well-being is a strong economy from which everyone can benefit.
- b. Helping people get the best start and age well – it is our fundamental duty to protect the most vulnerable and to maximise the opportunities for Essex people, whatever their circumstances, to make the best lives they can for themselves and their families.
- c. Help create great places – we are the guardians of the county for future generations and we will always act responsibly to address the growth needs of our population whilst maintaining the essence of what makes Essex great.
- d. Transform the Council – we know that none of the above can be achieved if the Council is not constantly pushing itself to be more resourceful and more efficient.

The Council, focussed on those aims, achieved much during the year and the following are a small sample of its achievements:

- Delivered more than 2,750 school places
- Delivered a campaign to promote apprenticeships to employers and young people
- Ensured there is a range of employment support services for people with disabilities, including those with mental health needs
- Influenced the roll out of broadband in Essex to support businesses and invested £5m
- Invested £120m of capital to improve and maintain the roads in Essex

- Been inspected by Ofsted and HMIP who found our Children's Services and Youth Offending Service to be outstanding
- Continued to reduce the number of permanent admissions to residential care
- Driven a truly collaborative approach with NHS partners to health and social care integration to achieve best outcomes for Essex residents.
- With partners, developed, a new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy with clear objectives around improving outcomes for mental health; obesity; health inequalities; and long-term conditions
- Developed a Green Infrastructure Strategy to take a positive approach to enhance, protect and create an inclusive and integrated network of high-quality green spaces and green infrastructure in Greater Essex
- Completed an efficiency review of existing waste infrastructure to ensure it remains fit for purpose and is optimised.
- Worked with district colleagues and counter fraud experts to deliver £700,000 through identifying fraud in Council Tax and Business Rates
- Delivered £5m of receipts through sales of surplus assets which has helped to fund the capital programme and identified £7m more next year
- Delivered £59m savings and through a review of 720 fees and charges across all services, generated an extra £10m over 2 years to 2020/21

The success of some of the achievements was by working closely with partners across the county. This will become more necessary in the coming years.

In February the Council agreed the 2019/2020 budget which totals £939.9m in revenue to continue to deliver quality services to Essex residents, and £249m in the capital programme to fund investments to ensure the long-term financial stability of this council.

The Council has delivered £311m of savings in the last 4 years by improving value and will be making a further £60m of savings and efficiencies in the 2019/20 Budget.

The budget contains an increase in Council tax of 2.99% and 1% for the Adult Social Care Precept. These increases recognising that we are a low tax council, having only increased Council Tax 3 times in the last 9 years and also do this balancing the needs of the taxpayer with the need to provide our vital services and ensure they are on a sustainable footing. Additional funding, for repairs to footpaths /pavements; mental health schemes; prevention of homelessness and rough sleepers; for partnership work to help children at risk of County Lines, was announced.

Essex's ambition to be the leading Council in innovation and efficiency is at the heart of its budget proposals and Essex was recently rated in the top ten most productive councils in the country.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE POLICE

Cllr Wakeling advised the this was not available as the Police were unable to send anyone, but it was the view of the Parish Council that a representative from the Police should attend the Annual Parish Meeting and should attend a Parish Council meeting once a quarter. The Parish Council was also opposed to the closing of the Police Station in Maldon.

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 **Mr Graham Cornell** for being so generous with his time over many, many years to the benefit of Cold Norton and its residents. Graham's willingness to help with and at village events - combining kindness and patience with his acting skill, plus his cheerful and friendly face around the village, all contributed to the unanimous vote of the Parish Councillors to make this award to Graham Cornell.

Cllr Wakeling then thanked the Clerk for all her work during the past year and thanked all those attending this APM. Questions/comments were then invited.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

The question of adoption of Cherry Blossom Lane by ECC was asked – the response was that enquiries had been made with ECC re adoption of the road, but that for this to be considered the road would have to be made up to an 'ECC standard', and from initial enquiries with an ECC Engineer would cost in the region of £324,000 for construction only (does not include, conveyance, design, legal or inspection fees).

There was also a suggestion made about locking the car park at night – not feasible at the moment.

The meeting was closed at 8.47pm. 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.....