



Cold Norton's Annual Parish Meeting
Held at 8 pm on Wednesday 21st April 2021
Remotely by Zoom

THOSE PRESENT: Parish Councillors:

Cllr T Dixon
Cllr Mrs M Gunn (Vice Chairman)
Cllr B Haydon (Chairman)
Cllr P Jacklin
Cllr Mrs J Luck
Cllr J Richardson
Cllr A Romang

Cllr Mrs P Channer, County Councillor
Cllr Mrs J Fleming, District Councillor
Mrs. M. Dyer (Parish Clerk) and 9 Members of the Public

Due to COVID-19 this Annual Parish Meeting was held remotely by Zoom. Usually, all reports are given at the meeting, but this year all reports were issued as part of the invitation to attend/agenda which was delivered to all homes in the village by hand (except for 23 outlying homes which were posted). The County and District reports were not read out at the meeting and only highlights from the Chairman's report were given at the meeting. However, at the meeting questions/comments were invited relating to these reports.

Regarding the report relating to the Playground & Car Park Project a PowerPoint presentation was given at the meeting; the script from the PowerPoint presentation had been included in the invitation/agenda as this formed part of the public consultation with the residents relating to the Parish Council applying for a loan through the PWLB for the car park element of this project.

So that there is a record of the activity relating to the village, all reports and the script from the PowerPoint Presentation are included as part of these minutes, even though not all were read at the actual meeting.

WELCOME

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Brian Haydon welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proceedings for the evening.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from District Cllr Ms Sue White

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 29th May 2019.

Cllr Haydon proposed that these be approved; Cllr Richardson seconded the proposal. The minutes will be signed as a correct record by Cllr Haydon when it is possible.

THE PARISH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT BY CHAIRMAN CLLR BRIAN HAYDON

Your Councillors are:

- Brian Haydon Chairman & Stow Maries Aerodrome Representative
- Marion Gunn Vice Chairman & Nature Conservation Area Representative
- Alex Romang Parish Council Representative on Village Hall Management Committee
- Joanne Luck Parish Councillor
- Jem Richardson Parish Councillor & Leader PCP Working Group
- Tim Dixon Parish Council Representative for Police
- Phil Jacklin Parish Council Rights of Way Representative

Covid 19

- The pandemic has affected all of us to a greater or lesser degree and fundamentally changed the rhythm of our life in the village.
- The Parish Council quickly realised that we should help the situation and decided to create the Community Hub to understand who needed help and who was in a position to provide assistance and coordinate the response.
- The reaction was tremendous, and we quickly had a stream of willing volunteers offering their services to get shopping, pick up prescriptions, walk dogs, be 'phone buddies' and countless other ways of helping vulnerable folks unable to leave their home.
- We soon understood that, in addition to the formal Hub, lots of you were coming together and offering neighbourly help in many ways.

Thank you so much!

Finance

- The Parish Council budget for the year from 1st April 2021 has been maintained at £31,189 including provision for the Playground and Car Park project.
- Financial support for the Village Hall due to Covid 19 related loss of income has been estimated at up to £7,000 although it is hoped that government grants may assist towards covering this shortfall.
- To be prudent the precept has been set at £38,189 representing an increase of £7,106 over the previous year which equates to £17.77 (£1.48 per month) per household.
- The precept for next year will take into account any grants towards running the Village Hall we have been able to obtain during this financial year.

- The Council continues to benefit from income derived from the solar panels on the Village Hall amounting to c. £2,000.
- Regular items of expenditure include Village Caretaking, maintenance, grass cutting, litter clearing, street lighting, PWLB loans, and administration.
- Following a successful trial, regular Trucam traffic speeding traps operated by Maldon District Council have been included as a regular feature of budgeted expenditure.

Planning

- Planning Applications are considered and approved by Maldon District Council who seek opinion from individual residents and the Parish Council which expresses its view according to the planning policy guided by the village surveys of 2000 and 2011. The PC does not have decision making authority.
- During the year April 2019 to March 2020 the PC considered 53 planning applications (55 in the previous year) of these 53, Cold Norton PC had submitted comments on 39 (the other 14 were a mix of "for information only"/withdrawn etc.). Of the 39 the PC submitted a view on, CNPC had not objected to/recommended approval of 28 applications and recommended refusal for 11 applications. MDC agreed with 32 recommendations made by Cold Norton PC but did not agree with 7 views submitted by the Parish Council.
- This year from April 2020 to March 2021 the PC considered 35 planning applications (53 in the previous year) of these 35, Cold Norton PC had submitted comments on 29 (the other 6 were a mix of "for information only"/withdrawn etc.). Of the 29 the PC submitted a view on, CNPC had not objected to/recommended approval of 20 applications and recommended refusal for 9 applications. MDC agreed with 21 recommendations made by Cold Norton PC but did not agree with 7 views submitted by the Parish Council – one decision was still awaited from MDC at time of writing this report.
- The Parish Council responded to the Bradwell B pre-application consultation after conducting a village-wide survey and continued to engage in the consultation process which has been put on hold for the coming year. The response document is available on the Cold Norton Parish website: <https://www.cold-norton.org.uk/essex/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/BRADWELL-B-STAGE-1-RESPONSE.pdf>
- The Parish Council is participating in consultation for the South Woodham Ferrers North Development Masterplan adopted by the Chelmsford City Council. In conjunction with the other Dengie Parish Councils, we are lobbying for road improvements to accommodate increases traffic volumes due to this development and other new housing in Maldon and the Dengie plus Bradwell B related traffic.

Highways & Road Safety

- Speeding continues to be an issue along Latchingdon Road and St Stephens Road so trial speed traps provided by the Trucam team from Maldon District Council have been instigated to monitor infringements to the limit through the village.
- Residents have been very helpful in displaying speed limit warning signs on their wheelie bins and are encouraged to continue this practice.
- The PC continues to monitor and report issues relating to potholes, footways and public rights of way such as overgrown vegetation, broken signs etc. These matters are the responsibility of Essex Highways who have an excellent website where issues

can be reported directly into the system by members of the public:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us>

- Parking by parents dropping off and collecting children from the Primary School continues to create congestion at times and the PC works with the school to encourage use of the village hall car park.

Village Hall

- During the last year activities in the Hall have been severely limited and it has been used only by Pre-School.
- Parish Council meetings have been conducted through Zoom.
- The Village Hall Management Committee has worked hard to maintain the building during the lock-down and conserve funds considering the drastic reduction in income.
- Limited financial support has been available, but any relevant grants will be applied for.
- In the meantime, the minimum fixed costs involved in owning and maintaining the Hall have been included in the Parish Council budget and included in the Precept as an exceptional item for this year only.
- Grateful thanks are due to the Management Committee for their support and hard work.

Playground and Car Park Project

- The PCP Project has been developed throughout the year by the Working Group lead by Jeremy Richardson.
- Community consultation and participation and has been encouraged throughout the process.
- Jem will make a presentation featuring current progress later in the meeting.
- Thanks to Jem and the working group for the work and time devoted to this exciting enterprise.

Other Matters

- The Norton Pub has been able to serve the community with excellent takeaways during the pandemic thanks to hard work by Boris and George supported by the renewed Norton Community Pub Committee and is looking forward to strong support from us all now restrictions have been reduced.
- The Parish Council manages the open spaces in the village including the playing field grass cutting, Cowpiece Nature Reserve and Three Ashes Corner.
- The play equipment is checked weekly by our Village Caretaker and formally inspected annually by the independent authority.
- Dog Fouling continues to be an issue at times and is subject to a maximum fine of £1,000 so please be vigilant.
- Unfortunately, there has been a spate of fly tipping and littering of gas cylinders during lock-down. Reports may be made to MDC directly or through the Parish Council.

.... and Finally

- Welcome to new residents to our village. We know you will enjoy becoming part of our community.
- Thanks to everyone who has helped individual residents and the village as a whole, during these difficult times:
 - NHS heroes
 - Essential workers collecting recycling, making deliveries, staffing supermarkets, doctors, vets
 - Community Hub
 - Cold Norton Primary School and Cold Norton Pre-School
 - Village Hall Management Committee
 - Seed Library
 - Hunts for Christmas Elves and Easter Eggs
 - The many unspoken kindnesses between friends and neighbours
 - My fellow Parish Councillors

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT BY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MRS FLEMING

I suppose none of us would have anticipated that a year on from the first lockdown we would be in a third lockdown. Covid 19 has dominated the last year and radically altered how we operate. In my view Maldon District Council's response to the Covid 19 pandemic has been very good. Communication with the community and joint working with the Maldon CVS and other voluntary partners has been excellent.

Maldon District Council as you know has been responsible for the administration of grant funding to businesses and other organisations both Statutory and Discretionary and this has created obvious extra pressures.

Since the last Annual Meeting in June 2020, all Committees are now back up and running and meet virtually via Microsoft Teams. Residents are now able to view Committee Meetings via the Council's You Tube Channel which greatly improves accessibility but brings with it certain other downsides (!) Committees now meet at the earlier time of 6pm, other than Performance, Governance & Audit (PGA) and Joint Standards which meet during the working day. Working Groups also continue to operate during the working day. In short, the Council, staff and Councillors have adapted to the new normality and generally it is working well.

As you know, the main reception of the Council Offices is being used by the NHS as a vaccine centre for the patients of the Maldon GP Practices. Largely staffed by volunteers, the centre has been widely praised for its efficient working (including this week by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care!) The rest of the Council Offices remain closed for visitors and the vast majority of staff continue to work from home. Customers are encouraged to engage with the Council digitally through the My Maldon portal although Customer Service Telephone Lines are also available. My concern with this drive is that the District has a high proportion of elderly residents many of whom are not comfortable with the technology. Some face-to-face appointments with services such as the Housing Team are available on a pre-arranged basis. Maldon Citizen's Advice Bureau offices are open to visitors again by appointment.

One issue that has featured regularly in my In Box over the past year and has now become less of an issue for the time being is that of Bradwell B. BRB are now concentrating on the more technical aspects of the project delayed as a result of Covid and will resume the Consultation process at a later date. As you know, the District Planning Committee voted against BRB's planning application for exploratory works and an appeal is pending against that decision.

Other recent items of note include: the bringing forward of the Local Development Plan Review (originally not due until 2022), and loss of our Five-Year Housing Land Supply.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Councillors all for the great work they do for the Parish of Cold Norton.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT 2020/21 - COUNTY COUNCILLOR MRS PENNY CHANNER

The last Annual Report was written when COVID 19 had started to get a real grip and was affecting lives in more ways than ever imagined. The last twelve months have been dominated by the impact of Covid 19 with many losing family, friends, work colleagues and for others COVID 19 has left a legacy of continuing health issues which hopefully, given time, will improve.

ECC has worked tirelessly with communities to try and keep people as safe and secure as possible during these unprecedented times.

One of ECC's priorities is 'Securing inclusive economic growth'. Health of Essex's economy is so important to the long-term well-being of its communities, and it remains a right priority now, as it was before Covid.

COVID 19 has affected jobs. ECC has piloted a Business Accelerator Scheme to support people who have been made redundant as a result of the crisis to start their own businesses; launched its own Kickstart programme to support new jobs in the county, working with small businesses to help them access government support to take on new recruits; set up a Covid-19 Business Information Service to provide businesses with advice on any issues they had in relation to Covid; commissioned Let's Do Business to provide support for employers across the county to safeguard jobs; establishing a new £100m Economic Growth and Investment fund to promote the county; provided £2.2m to Districts to be distributed to Essex businesses through adaptation grants.

At the start of the pandemic ECC moved hundreds of staff onto 7-day working rotas to support hospital discharge for vulnerable people, requiring social care support; created a Covid-19 Response Fund worth £12m to support additional costs that care providers had to meet to keep people safe; additional capacity was secured for Care Beds so that people could be discharged from hospital into an appropriate setting; technology used to support disabled people who could no longer access day opportunities; use of Care Phones to enable people to stay connected to their loved ones during lockdown.

For young people, ECC maintained critical children's services; worked closely with its schools to ensure they were able to operate safely when open; where appropriate, safeguard the access to education for the children of key workers and the most vulnerable.

ECC set up Operation Shield, working with the Community, Voluntary sector, district, city and borough Councils which enabled the 60,000 people who had to Shield to access the support they needed. 7,000 volunteers were recruited to the Essex Well-being Service undertaking 40,000 tasks on behalf of residents who were unable to do those things for themselves. The volunteers remain supporting those who are still shielding or self-isolating.

To help hard-pressed families ECC delivered 22,850 free Summer holiday activity places, ensuring that throughout the summer holidays children could participate in physical activities and get a nutritious lunch, whilst parents were supported with free childcare.

Through ECC Public Health and Adult Social Care teams the lives of Essex people have been protected and safeguarded; including developing an Infection Control Plan - distributing more than £31m in funding to support infection control in its Care settings; the Essex Contact Tracing Service to manage outbreaks in sensitive settings has been set up; working with partners to manage the set-up of vaccination sites and the recruitment of Vaccination Marshall Volunteers.

2020/2021 was the first year of the Essex Climate Action Commission and it has produced its interim report. ECC has continued work towards net zero carbon emissions investing in and committed to environmental action and innovation. It is already building net zero school buildings; already converting streetlights to LED; already using innovative low carbon techniques, such as Leaky Dams and Natural Flood Management.

The Essex Forest Initiative, 375,000 new trees, is ahead of schedule. ECC announced that the first £2.5m of the £5m Climate Reserve was for an ambitious programme delivering green growth; net zero buildings, renewable energy and electric transport solutions, while making the county more resilient to the impacts of climate change, supporting the natural environment.

The 2021/22 budget only applied 1.50% Social Care Precept, no increase in the Council Tax element allowed, recognising that residents as well as ECC were under financial pressure.

A further £1m is allocated for community action for the Essex Environment with £500,000 to be spent on community initiatives to encourage people to create less waste, use less tap water, produce less carbon, travel sustainably, and use safe, renewable energy. The other £500,000 will be invested in a competition to help four communities in Essex go further and to become national pioneers in net zero carbon communities.

ECC aims to transform adult social care, while with it being fit for purpose to deal with the increasing demands within the system, the vision is that every adult will be able to live as independently as possible and enjoy a good, meaningful life.

The Locality Fund has seen more than £700,000 being invested into more than 350 worthy local community initiatives. The fund will continue for 2021/2022, each member again receiving £10,000 to spend in their respective divisions.

A further £7.2m capital funding allocated to the Local Highways Panels, an additional £200,000 for each, each year for the next three years. £180,000 has been added to the revenue budget for LHPs.

ECC has supported children not only with meals but spent £900,000 on 5,000 laptops to those who needed them for remote learning. An unprecedented amount of education time has been disrupted or lost because of COVID. To help address this and associated issues the intention is to establish an Education Recovery Task Force, which will have an independent Chairman, to lead and oversee the recovery of children. 1.5m has been placed in a reserve to support the task force work; 500,000 of which is to expand the summer holiday scheme to a wider group than just those in receipt of free school meals and to support formal learning catch up; another £500,000 to support children's emotional wellbeing and mental health.

£500,000 in the budget will be used to work on violence and vulnerability, to protect children from being targeted by gangs by disrupting gang activity and breaking the cycle of violence.

Over the last twelve months ECC has worked with the main single focus to address the challenges of Covid. It will continue doing that over the next twelve months. A fundamental responsibility of government is to save lives; working with partners and with central government ECC intends to protect people, families, communities from the COVID virus, recognising the strength and resilience of our communities is going to be even more important in future.

PLAYGROUND & CAR PARK (PCP) PROJECT – CLLR JEREMY RICHARDSON

PCP Project Background and Status:

- Initiated in 2018 following response to Playing Field Questionnaire, key findings were:
- Playing field and Village Hall are underutilised because:
- Poor state of the play equipment
- Lack of equipment for children of all ages
- Lack of car park space
- Poor state of Cherry Blossom Lane (CBL)

Brief history since 2018:

- Fund raising by residents through 2019 has generated over £4,000 towards a new play area
- Parish Council set aside £5,000 per year, now worth £15,000 towards the project
- Parish Council established the PCP Working Group to push the project forward, comprising of Councillors and Residents

The Working Group:

- Engaged with Chelmsford City Council (CCC) Parks Dept as Play Area partner
- Engaged with play equipment suppliers to receive proposals
- Applied for Planning Permission for car park extension (Planning permission obtained November 2020)
- Engaged with CCC and Essex Highways for initial options and estimates for work on CBL

New Play Area:

- To provide a larger range of equipment and make space for extra car parking, the new play area will be sited on the playing field
- Proposals from 3 shortlisted suppliers were publicised on Facebook, CNPC website and via posters at the village hall
- Residents selected Kompan
- At the same time the Parish Council sought proposals from 3 suppliers for installation/safe surfacing:
- Chelmsford City Council has been selected as installation partner
- The Parish Council resolved to seek a loan to pay for the installation. We await the approval

Car Park Extension:

- Planning Permission obtained Nov 2020
- 14 extra spaces

- One charging bay for electric vehicles
- Cycle Stands
- Plastic grid surface with grass infill
- Restricted to cars and light vans only
- Proposals received from 4 suppliers
- Reduced to a short list of 2 contractors

Cherry Blossom Lane:

Working Group:

- Joined by local resident with commercial construction experience
- Obtained advice from Civil Engineering Consultancy (FOC)
- Developed a detailed design and specification for the work
- Engaged with 4 Contractors who proposed for the work
- Now reduced to a shortlist of 2

Car Park extension and Cherry Blossom Lane to be Let as one contract, funded by a Public Works Loan.

It is estimated a loan of approx. £100,000 will be required.

Cost of a £100,000 loan over 30 years at 2.16% is approx. is £4,492 per annum, which would require no increase in precept (Council tax)

Therefore, we recommend the Council resolves to apply for a Public Works Loan to fund this phase of the project

Loan application to be submitted following feedback from the Annual Parish Meeting

Conclusion - The PCP project is a major investment for the Village:

- Work on Play Area scheduled to commence in May – will last up to 4 weeks
- Car Park extension and Cherry Blossom Lane works can only proceed with a Public Works Loan, but with interest rates at historic lows, the loan repayments can currently be met with no increase in precept

If successful, work on the Car Park and Cherry Blossom Lane could commence in July 2021

This APM is the final part of the public consultation before applying for funding

We want to hear your views!

OPEN SESSION OF QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Question 1: Starter homes for young people/5-year land supply?

Response: Land supply was set in 2017, but 5-year review in 2022 - part of review by MDC, Planning Officers working on; also, Cold Norton Parish Council has undertaken a housing needs survey.

Question 2: Upgrade of Cherry Blossom Lane – will it then be adopted by ECC?

Response: No, there will therefore need to be ongoing maintenance.

- Question 3:** Electric Charging will it be free?
Response: To be confirmed if it can be 'fed' by the VH Solar Panels
- Question 3a:** Can the electric charging stations be extended and then generate income for the Parish Council?
Response: Will be considered by the Parish Council
- Comment 4:** I am against charging points for car parking in the VH car park; concerned that people will park there for the free electricity. Encouraging more people to park in the VH car park would not be good for Cherry Blossom Lane residents. Feedback from the village was that the road needed to be improved for people to use the VH and playing field facilities.
Response: Parking conditions state that there must be charging point and cycle bays.
- Comment 5:** Separate the road and car park - define edge of car park. Dedicated 'in & out'.
Response: There will be speed bumps and related signage. There will be improvements to the path on one side because of children using the playground.
- Comment 6:** Afterhours activity by youths in car park – suggest bollards to stop entry (plus offer to put up and down).
- Question 7:** Improvements only to section of road to VH?
Response: Yes, but the £100,000 does also include the new car parking area
- Comment 8:** Install CCTV in car park to deter anti-social behaviour.
Response: Will consider as cost is not so prohibitive these days
- Comment 9:** Basketball court – enhance this or install items for older children.
Response: Plan is for an outdoor gym on the playing field suitable for all (children and adults) in 2022 when grants may be more easily available.

The meeting was closed at 9.10pm. Cllr Haydon thanked everyone for 'logging on'.

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