



Cold Norton's Annual Parish Meeting

Held at 8 pm on Wednesday 8th May 2024

THOSE PRESENT: Parish Councillors:

Cllr Mrs M Gunn (Vice Chairman)
Cllr P Jacklin
Cllr Mrs J Luck
Cllr J Richardson
Cllr A Romang

Cllr Mrs J Fleming, Essex County Councillor
Cllr Ms S White, Maldon District Councillor
Mrs Jackie Ralph, Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
Mrs. M. Dyer (Parish Clerk) and 11 Members of the Public

WELCOME

The Vice Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Mrs Marion Gunn welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proceedings for the evening.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Parish Cllrs Haydon and Dixon and District Cllr Mrs Lisa Wiffen.

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 31st May 2023.

Cllr Mrs Luck proposed that these be approved; Cllr Richardson seconded the proposal. These were then duly signed as a correct record by Cllr Mrs Gunn.

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

A full copy of the Chairman's report was distributed to attendees. Cllr Mrs Gunn invited residents to read this at their leisure, but at the meeting just picked out salient points relating to the following topics: Members of the Parish Council, budget/finance, planning, highways and road safety, parking at the school still an issue, Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) (part of the Chairman's report was read the out), village appraisal, Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome and other matters. Regarding dog waste Cllr Mrs Gunn urged residents to report this to MDC advising day/time/location.

The full report is reproduced below:

Parish Councillors

The Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council was held prior to the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting on 1st May 2024. The following appointments were duly proposed and confirmed unanimously:

Brian Haydon:	Chairman & Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome Representative
Marion Gunn:	Vice Chairman & Nature Conservation Area Representative; Transport Representative
Alex Romang:	Parish Council Representative on Village Hall Management Committee
Joanne Luck:	Parish Councillor Representative at Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils; Transport Representative
Jem Richardson:	Parish Councillor Representative for Playing Fields and Playground
Tim Dixon:	Parish Council Representative for Police/NAP
Phil Jacklin:	Parish Council Rights of Way Representative

Finance

- The Parish Council budget for the year from 1st April 2024 has been set at £44,694 including on-going support for the Playground, Car Park, and Village Hall.
- This represents an increase of £3,194 over the previous year, which has been held below current inflation and equates to £0.64 per month per household.
- The Council continues to benefit from income derived from the solar panels on the Village Hall roof amounting this year to £2,157.
- Regular items of expenditure include village caretaking, village hall and general maintenance, grass cutting, litter clearing, street lighting, PWLB loans, and administration.

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. The PC does not have decision making authority.
- This year from April 2023 to March 2024 the Cold Norton Parish Council was asked to comment on 37 applications. CNPC recommended approval for 3 applications whilst 23 were not objected to. 11 applications were recommended for refusal. The total number of applications made during 23/24 represents a big increase over the 19 applications made in our parish during 22/23.
- Maldon District Council agreed with the opinion of CNPC for 20 of the applications, did not agree with 11 and a decision is still awaited for 6 applications.
- The Parish Council continues its participation in 'The Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils' and continues to lobby for road improvements to accommodate increased traffic volumes due to development and other new housing in Maldon and the Dengie.

Highways & Road Safety

- Speeding continues to be an issue along Latchingdon Road and St Stephens Road. Speed traps provided by the Trucam team from Maldon District Council are implemented regularly. In the year April 23 to March 24 a total of 40 drivers were caught speeding. In addition to monitoring the 30 mph limit through the village new locations have now been approved to check speeds in 40 mph locations near Three River Golf Club and beyond the bridge towards Palepit.
- The Council has been working with our County Councillor to introduce a 20 mph zone around the school and expects this to be implemented in the coming weeks.
- 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. Roads and pavements, Essex County Council (essexhighways.org)

- 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

- Activities in the Hall have progressed during the year, and it continues to be used by Pre-School.
- The Village Hall Management Committee has worked hard to maintain the building and thanks are due to Members who have voluntarily given their time to complete various tasks.
- The Chairman's Report will be provided separately and reflects a positive future.
- Grateful thanks are due to the Management Committee for their support and hard work.

2023 Village Appraisal

- The Parish Council has completed analysis of the data collected from the survey.
- A new publication, "Cold Norton Village Appraisal: 2023" is presently in print and will be distributed to every household in the near future.
- This information enables the Parish Council to respond to events such as Planning consultations and Village Hall management initiatives with a documented consensus of residents' aspirations and opinions.

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome

- The Joint Consultative Committee meeting conducted in September 2023 highlighted the ever-growing significance the Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome represents to both the immediate area of the Dengie villages and indeed to the whole nation. Unfortunately, the CEO Report warned of the urgent need to improve the financial position of the charity to safeguard its future, having suffered through the Covid and cost-of-living crises.
- The vital importance of the work of SMGWA in preserving both the fabric and heritage of this unique site and, importantly, the history it embodies cannot be overstated.
- The volunteers have contributed enormous time and effort to preserve the aerodrome itself and establish it as an important educational and recreational resource.
- The aerodrome has become a popular destination for the local community, not only for key events such as Propwash and Wings & Wheels but also for educational workshops such as the 'Head in the Clouds' STEM sessions for schools, scouts & guides, and other young people. The Mess Restaurant and Museum Shop contribute greatly to the attraction.
- You can visit their website to book upcoming events such as Wings and Wheels on 26 May and Wings and Wags Dog show on 4 August for very interesting and fun days out.
- There is an excellent café on site operating in the Mess. Entrance is free of charge for those only visiting the Café.

Other Matters

- The Norton pub continues to serve the community thanks to hard work by Boris and George supported by the Norton Community Pub Committee and relies on strong support from us all.
- The Parish Council manages the open spaces in the village including the playing field grass cutting, Cowpiece Nature Reserve and Three Ashes Corner.
- Dog Fouling continues to be an issue at times and is subject to a maximum fine of £1,000 so please be vigilant.

.... and Finally

- The **2024 Party in the Park** will be held on the Playing field on Saturday 29th June and everyone is welcome to enjoy a fabulous day of fun and entertainment. Further details will be provided by Phil Jacklin who deserves enormous thanks for the time and effort devoted to organising this event. Look out for posters and details about buying wristbands.
- As always, we welcome new residents to our village. We know you will enjoy becoming part of our community.
- I'd like to repeat my thanks to everyone who has helped individual residents and the village community during the last year:
 - 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
 - The many unspoken kindnesses between friends and neighbours
 - My fellow Parish Councillors

Cllr Brian Haydon – Chairman

Below is the report from the VHMC

VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT FROM DARREN SKITMORE, CHAIRMAN OF THE VHMC

I am pleased to say that this is a much more update report than I have been able to give in recent years. This is, in large part, due to the support that we have been given by the Parish Council.

As last year I can report that the village hall remains in a good state of repair and is very much open for business. However rising running costs are having an impact on us as, with everyone else, and we have been forced to increase the hiring charge significantly, and this will have to be constantly monitored.

A 'Walk Round Check' was done in January of this year and several problems were highlighted. Some remain outstanding but the vast majority have been addressed with the help again of some very good friends of the village hall – Graham Cornell, Alex Romang and Marion Gunn – to name but three, who carry out small maintenance jobs for us and thereby save us a fortune.

We still only have only 5 members, including the officers on the committee, but, because of the Parish Council support, seem to be managing ok.

We have not yet had our AGM, but anticipate that the current members will be willing to carry on for another year – but that does not mean that new members wouldn't be very warmly welcomed!

If anyone wants to volunteer or have any suggestions, we would love to hear from you.

Thank you to the Parish Council for given us the much needed boost.

PARTY IN THE PARK 2024, CLLR PHIL JACKLIN

Cllr Jacklin advised that the Queen's Jubilee was the first 'Party in the Park', complete with a live singer, this had limited success due to the weather but was enjoyed by all who attended well wrapped up!!

Party in the Park 2024 will be held on 29th June complete with live entertainment, a DJ and a variety of stalls. Full details on posters and via social media and there will be a dedicated email address for the event. Volunteers are needed to sell tickets, plus marshals. Chris Edwards will be organising a raffle. Proceeds will go towards the upkeep of the village hall.

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT BY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MS SUE WHITE

District Cllr Ms White started by talking about planning and the Local Development Plan (LDP), which is being updated – this is a long process. At the moment local District Cllrs have a say in planning applications that are called into committee – this ensures that the local view is considered.

The next topic was the possible £5 million from the Government for culture projects, but Cllr Ms White advised that the Council has spoken up and asked MPs for support, highlighting that access to health services is where the money is needed most; another concern is the lack of infrastructure in the district and access to services - the £5 million for the Maldon District could provide a much needed opportunity to unlock a new conversation with the NHS, Essex County Council and Essex Highways for that much needed infrastructure. Or maybe establish a health hub with St Peters Hospital due to be closed.

Places Leisure, who operate Leisure Centres for MDC have been awarded £6.5k from the Public Health Accelerator Bid (PHAB) fund to run a six-week aqua exercise programme in collaboration with GPs, Hospitals and Physiotherapists.

MDC has awarded a grant of £600 to support the Art Trail in Burnham. The Secretary of State has approved King Charles III England Coastal Path in Essex – this will link all three sections of the Saltmarsh Coast (Wallasea Island to Burnham-on-Crouch, Burnham-On-Crouch to Maldon and Maldon to Salcott). The Saltmarsh Coast Walking Festival will take place this year from 27th September to 6th October. UFest 2024 will be held on 16th August, a FREE event, which includes 'taste day sports' for all ages, young and old!!

Moving on to financial matters, Cllr Ms White advised that the MDC budget was agreed with a 2.98% increase for the MDC element of the budget. Cllr Ms White then explained that for every £1 of council tax paid by residents it is shared in the following way:

- Essex County Council receives 71p
- Maldon District Council receives 11p
- Police Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex – Policing & Community Safety receives 11p
- Essex Police Fire & Crime Commissioner – Fire & Rescue Authority receives 4p
- Parish & Town Councils receive 3p (NB this is an average across all the parish and town councils)

Cllr Ms White finished her report by talking briefly about the Rural Prosperity Fund, which is open to businesses and community organisations across the Maldon District; applications will need to focus on one of three key areas:

- Rural circular economy projects

- Impactful volunteering & social action projects to develop social & human capital in local places
- Small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas

Total funds available in year 1 will be £107,582 and £322,746 in year two. The Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) will provide support to applicants.

The other District Councillor for this area, Cllr Ms Wiffen, was unable to attend but had supplied a short report.

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT BY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MS WIFFEN

- MDC is the 4th best performing council in the UK
- The recent business survey had an increase in responses
- There are now 7 x 30 minute free parking bays
- 6th June 2024 8.45pm D-Day Beacon Ceremony lighting in Promenade Park
- Dementia awareness events including a 'dementia bus' to experience what it is like to be suffering from dementia
- Fly tipping - two people caught and fined £1,000 each.

Questions for the District Councillor

There was only one question raised:

Question: Why have the free parking spaces had been moved in the car park behind Edwards Walk to another car park, not so conveniently placed for a quick visit to a particular shop or bank

District Cllr Ms White said she would investigate this.

ECC MALDON DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT - COUNTY CLLR MRS JANE FLEMING

Cllr Mrs Fleming advised that her full report would be available to read on the Cold Norton Parish Council Website. At the meeting Cllr Mrs Fleming highlighted topics relating to;

- Saltmarsh Walk
- Ride London and Grants
- Community Hospitals
- Financial pressures for ECC especially in relation to social care, children and adult social care
- Government grants for highways
- Member led highways works
- Locality Fund

The full report is reproduced below.

I'm delighted to present my third annual report for Cold Norton Parish Council's Annual Parish Meeting. Firstly, I would like to thank the Parish Council for their tireless work in supporting residents and protecting the parish.

In September, I supported Maldon District Council's **Saltmarsh Coast Walking Festival**, a hugely successful week long event designed to encourage visitors to the area and showcase the District's unique coastal landscape and heritage. The Festival was recently listed in the top 10 UK Walking Festivals in The Guardian newspaper and will run again this year at the end of September. Also returning to the District again this year is the **Ride London Women's World Tour** which will be held on Saturday the 25th of May. The event is

accompanied every year by the launch of a grant scheme from the London Marathon Foundation which aims to encourage 'active' projects in the community. The scheme will be launched shortly, so if you have a project in mind, please get in touch with me for further details.

In January of this year, the Mid & South Essex Integrated Care Board launched a Consultation on '**Proposed Changes to Services at Local Community Hospitals**', which hopefully many of you have found the time to get involved with as the future of St Peter's Hospital and the future of medical services in the District are at its heart. The Consultation was extended to Thursday 11th April, and at its close over 5,000 responses have been received. A draft report will be published on the Consultation web page and a decision is expected to be made at the Integrated Care Board's July meeting.

The 2023/24 financial year was a challenging year. Like many councils up and down the country, Essex County Council experienced pressure on both Adult's and Children's Services and Home to School Transport. The care market continues to struggle with capacity, and there is still uncertainty around the timing and financial impact of potential care reform. The Council continues to operate in a climate of uncertainty and volatility - inflation has begun to reduce, although it is still above the Bank of England target rate, interest rates remain high, and the Council continues to face a significant level of uncertainty in the medium term.

Essex County Council has a legal responsibility to operate within a balanced budget. With the changes and reductions in Government grant funding over recent years, coupled with increasing and more complex demand for core services such as caring for the elderly, protecting vulnerable children and supporting those families who need it, the financial situation continues to be challenging.

In February, Essex County Council agreed its new Budget for 2024/25. The Council again had a stark choice in balancing its budget - of increasing taxes or facing unacceptable cuts in services. We balanced the budget against a backdrop of some of the most challenging times that local government has ever faced. New financial pressures caused by the need to support the recovery from Covid, the cost of living crisis, the war in Ukraine, the energy cost spike, and unprecedented inflation levels have all landed on top of existing challenges to reform and reshape our services and respond to huge increases in demand from those who need our help most.

The Everyone's Essex Annual Plan and budget was approved at Full Council and the net cost of services was set at £1,148.0million (m) for 2024/25 and the net revenue budget requirement was set at £1,073.4m (net cost of services less general government grants) for 2024/25.

The total council tax funding requirement was set at £848.3m for 2024/25 – Essex County Council's element of the council tax was increased by 4.99% comprising of a 2.99% increase in general council tax and 2.0% adult social care precept. This spending supports the most vulnerable in our communities including older people, people with learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and physical and sensory impairments. The precept is being used to insulate Adult Social Care from having to make higher savings, and support growth in need caused by changes in the demographics of our population and inflation, including the national living wage rise.

This resulted in the Essex County Council element of the council tax being £1,522.53 for a Band D property in 2024/25 - this is an increase of £1.39 per household per week.

Net expenditure of £1,148m is funded by council tax, business rates, Revenue Support Grant and General Government Grants. Income from Council Tax is the largest funding stream and will make up 75% of our funding in 2024/25.

Also at Full Council, the Cabinet Member for Highways made the welcome announcement of an **additional £12m for highways maintenance**, £8m of which will go to fund additional highways crews to be tasked by their local councillor, an extra £2m to go to Local Highways Panels and funding for extra enforcement resources. The details of the scheme for locally directed maintenance work will be announced shortly.

Investment is also being made in Essex for the long term: there has been a focus on levelling up to ensure that opportunity is spread to all parts of the county. Investment has been made in the construction of a **new railway station at Beaulieu Park** – the first publicly built new station on the Great Eastern Main Line for 100 years. In the last year, **125,000 trees have been planted** in the county in the last year, bringing the total since the start of this Council period to half a million. ECC has also expanded the **provision of care-tech** – enabling thousands of people to live more independent lives; and invested in innovation across our children's services, building on ECC's status as one of the best children's services authorities in the country.

In September I was invited to view the construction and sign the steel of the **new 420 place primary school** being built at Limebrook Way, Maldon.

The ECC Locality Fund reopened for applications last May with £5k allocated per Division. Again, I'm pleased to say that every penny of the funding specifically allocated for the **Maldon Division Locality Fund**, was spent. Projects that benefitted this year were Wentworth School Council for an Active Travel Scheme designed by Living Streets called The Walk to School Challenge, Beeleigh Mill Restoration Group to fund the renovation of the historic Elephant Boiler, Helping Hands a Carers Support Group to fund a day trip to Southwold this summer, Woodham Mortimer Litter Picking Group to fund litter picking equipment, and Purleigh Village Shop to fund the renovation of an outbuilding to use for community events. My thanks go to the councils and community groups who approached me with their projects and for the hard work put in.

The remaining Locality funding was directed to a new fund – the 'Local Community Fund.' **The Local Community Fund** operated as twelve separate funds, each covering the area of a district, borough, or city council. The fund for each district was £4,000 for each county councillor representing the relevant area. The fund had to be spent on one of three areas: Levelling up, Tackling Climate Change, and Youth services.

We (the ECC Division Members for the Maldon District) decided to **direct funding specifically to help our secondary schools** to purchase educational and pastoral care resources and to projects to support young people in the District. The projects funded to go into our secondary schools were a production called 'Shadows' produced by N-Act, a 'Do you Hear Me' work shop produced by Tic Box Productions, and Resilience Voyage for the visit of the County lines "Drugs Bus", a double decker bus designed to educate and to raise young people's awareness of gangs, grooming, and knife crime to our schools.

For our secondary schools we also funded the purchase of Check Your Drink (CYD), easy to use drug detection strips to be made available to sixth form students. These strips test for both GHB and Ketamine, the two most widely used drink spiking drugs.

Outside of our secondary schools we provided funding to the MDCVS Community Gaming Initiative project which runs activities for people, particularly younger people, to build social connections and other skills such as team working and problem solving.

We also funded two one-day events at the **Maldon and Burnham Skate Parks** run by King Ramps. The events were aimed at 100-150 young people with demonstrations from some of the country's top professional skateboarders and BMX riders. Competitions were held at the end of the events which were open to all abilities and judged by professionals. King Ramps provided prizes for the top 3 places in skateboard, scooter and BMX competitions. Workshops were also open to all ages and abilities for which full safety equipment (helmets knee, elbow and wrist pads) and skateboards and BMX bikes were provided.

The Locality Fund and the Local Community Fund open again for applications this May, so if you have a project or community initiative, please do contact me with your suggestions/applications at cllr.jane.fleming@essex.gov.uk

The Local Highways Panel work continued very slowly this year, with delivery of schemes once again impacted by resource issues at Essex Highways. Local Highways Panels are due a reset at the end of this month in terms of what type of scheme will fall within their remit and a new Member Led Local Works Scheme is also due to be launched shortly. I continue to argue for schemes within the Maldon Division and District to be a funding priority as speed reduction and highways safety are vital for those living and driving on our rural roads.

Throughout the year, I have continued to support residents with their concerns and to assist parishes with their issues requiring escalation. If you have concerns about an issue in the Division, please email me: cllr.jane.fleming@essex.gov.uk

Questions for the County Councillor

Question: How far down St Stephens Road will the proposed 20mph limit go?

Answer: Awaiting drawings from Highways, but will try and influence so it extends as far as possible past the school.

Question: The retention of St Peters Hospital – will ECC lobby for it to remain?

Answer: This is an NHS decision not an ECC decision. The Health Service doesn't want to build a new hospital. At the moment Radiography (i.e. diagnostic services) will stay until a new location can be found, but 'beds' will go.

Question: How was the new school in Maldon for 420 pupils funded?

Answer: By 106 monies from developers

Question: A new secondary school is needed in the district – will this happen?

Answer: There are 'rumbles' from developers, but 4,500 homes need to be built to justify a secondary school, so maybe, but this is a long way off. However, it is possible that the Plume School may be expanded at the upper level, using 106 monies

Comment: A resident thanked Cllr Fleming for resolving the drain issues in St Stephens Road that had been initially reported to highways in October 2023.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT & POLICE REPORT, MRS JACKIE RALPH

The Police were unable to attend so Mrs Ralph gave a short report on Neighbourhood Watch in the village, thanking all Members, as overall, the village was a crime-free village except one incident in Hackmans Lane. Scams continue to be an issue - "Who Called" a concern for many. Mrs Ralph will continue to send out reports and advice from the Police.

Cllr Romang thanked Mrs Ralph on behalf of the whole village for setting up this group and for her dedication and hard work liaising and working with the Police.

VILLAGER OF THE YEAR 2024

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

Cllr Mrs Gunn announced that this year the award was being given to **Mrs Jackie Ralph** for setting up the Cold Norton Neighbourhood Watch Group, all whilst she was actually away on a family holiday abroad!! And for also setting up a dedicated NhW WhatsApp and keeping everyone updated with information and advice from the Police.

Cllr Mrs Gunn presented Mrs Ralph with the shield engraved: “Jackie Ralph 2024”.

OPEN SESSION OF QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

There was only one item raised, this related to putting up Neighbourhood Watch Signs in the village – this would be investigated

Philip Wakeling offered a vote of thanks to all the Parish Cllrs, the District Cllrs and the County Cllr for all their work.

The meeting was closed at 9.02pm. Cllr Mrs Gunn thanked everyone for attending and invited all present to stay for refreshments, kindly organised by Mrs Chris Hawes who was duly thanked. Residents were advised that the Councillors would all be available to talk to on an informal basis during this time.

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