

EVENLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Evenley Parish Council Annual Meeting held on Monday 20th April 2015 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Alan Thornhill (Chair), Jean Morgan, Jackie Fox, Jill Kelly, Mike Bosher, Michael Genner, Kirsty Buttle (Clerk), County Cllr Ron Sawbridge, District Cllr John Townsend, Helen Howard (Northamptonshire Highways), Chris Wragg (Northamptonshire Highways), Kay Baul (Evenley Residents Association).

Also present were 22 parishioners.

1. Apologies

- Apologies were received from Keith Cousins, Kevin O'Reagan, Carrie O'Reagan. Mike Bosher will be late.

2. Minutes of previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 7th April 2014 were approved.

3. Matters arising – No matters were raised.

4. Report from Cllr Ron Sawbridge, Northamptonshire County Council

- The present method of the council providing services is no longer sustainable; it can't keep on reducing costs by improving efficiency in the way it has done over the last few years. Costs of the base budget have already been reduced by £200m and they still have to reduce by a further £148m over the next five years. A continuation of the present method of providing services would drastically reduce the quality to an unacceptable level. The council will need to become a much smaller organisation commissioning other agencies to carry out activities to help the council achieve its goals for residents. The County Council will dramatically reduce the number of employees down to around 250, commissioning services from a federation of organisations including private businesses, Social Enterprises, Mutuels, Council owned companies, and Charities. The intention will be to transfer as many existing staff as is possible to the new providers. These changes will be implemented gradually over the next five years.
- Cllr Sawbridge is concerned about the number of houses being built in Oxfordshire which will result in a traffic increase in many South Northamptonshire villages. He has initiated talks between the two county councils as he is very concerned about the adequacy of planned increased road infrastructure to support the larger traffic volume, even in North Oxfordshire. Cllr Sawbridge thinks it is absolutely necessary for Northamptonshire County Council to prepare a study of the impact that additional traffic is going to have on all the roads in the south of the County and to take action to mitigate its effects. The quality of life in South Northamptonshire is ranked as one of the highest in the UK. We are living in an area with good health facilities, long life expectancy, low crime rate, good weather, full employment, good school results, and a better than average feeling of personal wellbeing. Increasing traffic is going to erode

the advantages we enjoy and the situation will be made worse by construction traffic for HS2, if it goes ahead.

- The Empowering Councillors' Scheme - Each County Councillor receives £7,000 to spend on locally based projects and Cllr Sawbridge used last year's allocation as follows: £1,833 to Aynho towards the cost of the refurbishment of the Childrens Playground; £1,344 to Evenley to refurbish the War Memorial; £960 to Charlton for the replacement of a streetlight; £800 to Kings Sutton for a new Bowling Mat and £400 for a computer for use in the Memorial Hall. He had reserved the balance of £1,900 to refurbish the Childrens Playground at Farthinghoe but he is now going to fund this from the current year's allowance.

5. Report from Cllr John Townsend, South Northants Council

- The new offices in Towcester have been completed as part of the redevelopment of a derelict site in Towcester. Some opinions have been voiced that the project is extravagant. The previous building needed £1million to be spent on it so it was more cost effective to build new offices. The project has been completed at no cost to the tax payer and £200k will be saved on heating costs alone.
- John Townsend is uncontested as the District Councillor so he will remain in post.
- A parishioner asked if Council Tax will go down due to the savings made by the new offices in Towcester. Cllr Townsend replied that unfortunately, due to government grants having been reduced, the Council Tax will not be reduced but that the rates have remained the same for 4 years.

6. Report from Chris Wragg, Northamptonshire Highways

- If HS2 goes ahead then the commissioning of the line will begin mid 2024 with the opening expected to be in 2026. The main impact of HS2 on Evenley will be the construction traffic. There will be numerous construction compounds locally (best estimate of vehicles using the compounds is 800 per day) which are likely to increase the traffic by 20% on the A421 and 15% on the A43. Chris is seeking to minimise the traffic. Some of the vehicles may not be travelling far offsite. There will also be disruption to current road users caused by road closures and diversions.
- Parishioners expressed concerns about additional traffic in Evenley during the construction period. When the A43 was closed for 5 days many drivers used Evenley as an alternative route which caused lots of queues and some people used the Village Green for overtaking. This was very dangerous for users of the Village Green and the parishioners do not want to see this happening again. Chris assured the parishioners that there is no proposal for the construction traffic to use Evenley although this does not stop commuters using Evenley as an alternative route. There will be a community helpline to report any concerns/complaints to HS2 which would include concerns about construction traffic not using the designated routes.

7. Report from Helen Howard, Community Liaison Officer, Northamptonshire Highways

- There are traffic calming measures available to Evenley but funding would be needed to implement these. The Northamptonshire Highways team have a

budget of £40k so they can only put in traffic calming measures in places that need it due to a history of collisions etc, rather than as a preventative measure.

- A parishioner asked if signs could be put on the A43 before the roundabout just outside Evenley, to remind drivers to slow down as it is very dangerous for those joining the roundabout when leaving Evenley. Helen advised that this road is not the responsibility of Northamptonshire Highways but she will e-mail the Parish Clerk the contact details for the team who are responsible.
- A Councillor asked if the Community Impact Fund (CIF) for HS2 will include those affected by the 5 year construction period. Chris Wragg advised that the CIF has not yet been confirmed but when the rules on this scheme are clear it may be worth applying.
- A Councillor asked what the rules are regarding putting a one way priority in on the road into and out of Evenley. Helen stated that additional lighting, signage, road markings, drainage and accesses including fire access would all need to be considered.

8. Report from Brackley Police

- Alan Thornhill read out a report from Brackley Police as there was no one available to attend the meeting. There has been a spate of thefts from vehicles so the Police would like to remind the public to be vigilant and not to leave anything on display in their vehicles. Any suspicious activity should be reported by dialing 101.
- Brackley Police Station is going through a period of change. The front counter has now closed and three members of staff have now left. If anyone does need to contact their local police they can do so by calling 101.

9. Report from Kay Baul, Evenley Residents Association (ERA)

- In 2013 the ERA formulated the Evenley Matters group, responsible for the distribution of profits generated from the annual village fete. Evenley Matters has already pledged over £3500 to local groups, activities and charities.
- The ERA are concerned about the number of accidents and near misses on the A43 roundabout at Evenley. They presented their concerns to the County and District Councillors and the Chief Executive of South Northamptonshire Council and Cherwell District Council at their AGM. They are yet to hear of any firm recommendations or plans by the Highways Authority and Agency.
- The ERA will continue to press the Parish Council and other relevant authorities to take additional steps to reduce the levels of speeding in the village.
- The Evenley Fete and Dog Show is planned for Sunday 6th September. All are welcome and volunteers are still needed to help on a rota basis to run stalls or help set up.

10. Report from Cllr Alan Thornhill, Chairman, Evenley Parish Council

- In May last year Keith Cousins stood down as the Chairman after 15 years at the helm. He has continued as an active Councillor until his retirement this May. His continued guidance has been of great assistance to all of the Council, especially Alan as a new Chairman. Two other Councillors are retiring from the Parish Council. Michael Genner, who was very successful as a fund raiser and is now nominated in the Election of District Councillors for Brackley West Ward and Jackie Fox who brought a degree of common sense and is a stalwart of the

community. Also retired is Sheila Bailey who was the village correspondent to the Brackley Advertiser.

- Thanks were given to the Parish Council Wardens, Janet Cropley (Tree Warden), Kim Golding, (Snow Warden), Arthur Hunt, (Allotments Representative), Merrick Loggin for his management of the Evenley Common Pocket Park and Joyce Stevens for looking after the Notice Board. Thanks were also expressed to Carrie O'Regan (Footpaths Warden) who promotes group walks and cycle rides encouraging residents to explore the parish and its surroundings and Kevin O'Regan, our very successful Evenley Arts Co-ordinator, who has accomplished a number of very popular events and continues to go from strength to strength. Welcome to Mr and Mrs Millard who are jointly taking on the role of Evenley Correspondent to the Brackley Advertiser. If you have anything to promote or report please let them know. To date we have been unable to recruit a village resident to take on the role of Highways Warden which involves being the "eyes and ears" of the highways in the Parish of Evenley. Details of the post are available for anyone interested.
- The Parish Plan has now been passed and submitted as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- Thanks to Mike Boshier for his undaunted efforts in running speed-watch. The parish's Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) has been helpful in reducing speed and this was the motivation for the Parish Council to purchase a further sign, which has now been installed just before the entrance to the Village Hall. The majority of funding for this came from donations and other sources and not parish funds.
- The Parish Council considered it appropriate to mark the Anniversary of the start of World War I by refurbishing the village War Memorial. Thanks to a grant from county council funds, this work was carried out in time for Remembrance Sunday. English Heritage have added the War Memorial to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and it has been awarded Listed Building Status as Grade 11 by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and is published on the National Heritage List for England. Alan also commissioned a History of Evenley War Heroes which was carried out by Eric Millard and can be found on the Evenley Parish Council website (www.evenleypc.org.uk) and in the museum at the Red Lion.
- The Parish Council took the opportunity from new legislation to have an Evenley village flag which can be displayed on important local occasions. Evenley went through the process with the Flag Institute and the design has been approved and registered with the National Flag Institute, with an Evenley resident's winning design idea which encapsulates the spirit of Evenley.
- The Village Hall has needed some major repairs which involved injecting an internal damp course to cure the Village Hall's rising damp problem. The work has now been completed and the hall has been redecorated, paid for by grant monies secured by the Parish council. The Village Hall Committee have also done an excellent job increasing the bookings this year, with the money generated going directly towards costs for upkeep general maintenance of the hall and the provision of 65 new chairs.
- Pocket Park has been a source of concern due to litter thrown out of parked cars. The Parish Council recently fitted a chain across the entrance which seems to have restricted vehicles and cut the litter being left. The Parish Council require an organiser to promote a parish litter pickup – please contact Alan Thornhill for further details.

- Elections in 2015 – There are 9 candidates for the Parish Elections to be held on 7th May. The Parish Council needs to be an efficient team to continue the good work, especially in view of the looming concerns about traffic through the village and the obvious need to improve the Evenley A43 roundabout.
- Joyce Stevens, our parish Clerk, recently resigned. Joyce had served the parish council and our village community loyally for over fifteen years. We fully appreciate her undaunted service in this time.

11.AOB

- All Parish Council Candidates who are standing at the election on 7th May introduced themselves.
- Jackie Fox, who is standing down as a Parish Councillor, expressed her thanks to the Chair for his hard work and support of the Councillors.

12.Date of next Annual Parish Meeting – 18th April 2016