

Little Brook Ward Meeting

Held on Monday, 27th July 2020 at 7.30 p.m. via Zoom

Present

Croughton Parish Council

Cllr Brian Tomlin

Cllr Trevor Davies

Cllr Martin Hacon

Cllr Rodger James

Cllr Mike Tadman

Mrs Ann Le Druillenec (Clerk)

Aynho Parish Council

Cllr Leslie Leighton

Cllr Fi Burge

Cllr Jonathan Clinch

Cllr Jeremy James

Mr Chris Wilson (Clerk)

Evenley Parish Council

Cllr Cathy Ellis

Cllr Jeff Peyton-Bruhl

Cllr John Townsend, SNC

Cllr Rebecca Breese, NCC

Commander, Colonel John Hannah, Squadron Leader Clive Wood, Community Relations Adviser Laura Haddy, RAF Croughton

1. Welcome from Cllr Brian Tomlin, Chairman, Croughton Parish Council:

Cllr Tomlin welcomed everyone to the Meeting and made introductions.

2. To receive Apologies:

Apologies were received from:

Aynho Parish Council: Cllrs David Dean, Les Horley, Rachel Moroney

Croughton Parish Council: Cllrs Chris Fox, Vee Griffiths, Simon Kerby, Bill Morris

Evenley Parish Council: Cllrs Spencer Burnham, Jean Morgan, Charles Reader, Sue Ricketts, Mrs Cathy Knott (Clerk)

3. To approve the Minutes of the Little Brook Ward Meeting held at Aynho on 27th January 2020:

RESOLVED: It was proposed by Cllr Ellis and seconded by Cllr Tomlin to Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th January 2020.

4. Matters Arising:

None.

5. Colonel Jon Hannah, Commander, 422 Air Base Group, USAFE & Squadron Leader Clive Wood, RAF Croughton: Update on Developments at the Base:

Squadron Leader Wood updated the Meeting on the position since his briefings to Croughton and Evenley Parish Councils in June.

i) Online planning application for a new main gate with access from the B4031:

An Environmental Impact Assessment is required to be done before the application is formally presented to the Local Planning Authority (SNC).

ii) Previous application for JIAC and School: These are no longer to be built at RAF Croughton. In November 2018, the USA decided to retain RAF Molesworth and the JIAC will be built there.

iii) Application adjacent to Building 180, (2 new fixed antennas and Radomes): The application was submitted on 25th June 2020 and the planning process is underway.

Colonel Hannah had recently arrived from Germany and was looking forward to being involved in the community.

Colonel Hannah was grateful for the opportunity to participate in this meeting.

Cllr Tomlin thanked Colonel Hannah and Squadron Leader Wood for attending the meeting.

6. Councillor Rebecca Breese, Northamptonshire County Council: Update on the West Northamptonshire Unitary Programme, incl. the issue of Council Tax equalisation:

The Coronavirus Pandemic had delayed the progress of the unitary programme by an estimated 3 months and had given cause for concern that it might be delayed for a further year. Most staff were working from home.

The rapid spread of Covid-19 within the community had necessitated a different way of working with the vulnerable and elderly. Wrap around care needed to evolve. Special measures might be required to be put in place in certain areas, (e.g. Northampton Borough) where there was concern at the numbers of positive cases of Covid-19.

Cllr Breese has a seat on the Shadow Executive of the Unitary Council and is a member of the Task and Finance Group.

Northamptonshire had coped well financially in relation to the impact that Covid-19 had had on the budget. June 2020 showed a small underspend in the revenue budget and reserves had been maintained for the third year in a row. A £4.75 million grant from central government had not yet been allocated. The County Council could afford to wait and see how the situation evolved before doing so.

There were concerns over the safe and legal transfer of basic services to the new Unitary by 1st April 2021. In the last 2 months, 85% of all services had been split in two, leaving only a couple of services spanning both Unitary Authorities. The transfer over was continuing at pace.

Children's Trust: From 1st November 2020: An interim Chief Executive would be appointed to run this demand-led service for the whole of the county. There would need to be confidence in the appointee.

Council Tax Harmonisation: This was a complicated process. The aim was to achieve council tax harmonisation within 3-4 years.

Local Council Tax reform was more difficult to achieve but work was being done on this.

Cllr Breese talked about her work at the CAB (Brackley and Banbury branch): There were pockets of deprivation in South Northants. Concern was raised about the impact of council tax equalisation on South Northants tax payers due to the high dependency on council tax relief by rate payers in Northampton Borough. The Government's deadline for achieving this was 31st January 2021. The Secretary of State was being approached for dispensation and advice.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Breese for her report.

7. Councillor John Townsend, South Northamptonshire Council: Report:

Cllr Townsend had not been involved in the building of the new Council and expressed his gratitude to Cllr Breese for her work on this.

SNC's role during the pandemic had been huge.

The refuse collection had continued uninterrupted.

The Forum and Library had closed but re-opening both was under consideration.

Council meetings had been held remotely.

SNC had adopted the Local Plan, after 6 years of extraordinary effort. When West Northamptonshire Council takes over as the Local Planning Authority, Parish Councils would be advised to keep a close eye on local plans to determine development. Pressure for new settlements or villages would be required to be taken seriously.

Work had already started to revise the 2014 West Northamptonshire Plan, with a Call for Sites. Numbers in the 2014 Plan will remain unchanged for 3-4 years. The new Plan will take 5-6 years to complete. Issues include: potential development this side of the M40; creeping ribbon development along the A43 between J10 of the M40 and Northampton; Banbury - Milton Keynes; Cambridge/Oxford corridor.

SNC had been in existence for 50 years. A brief local history had been commissioned to be written by April 2021.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Townsend for his report.

8. Items for discussion submitted by Parishes:

8.1 Aynho Parish Council:

8.1.1 Travellers: Have Councils considered the risk to open spaces?

There had been mild but unfounded concern about travellers targeting spaces for use as encampments. The Council felt unprepared for liabilities arising from such usage, and of its obligations.

Both SNC and NCC have provision for dealing with such issues.

SNC: Enforcement action was successful in Yardley Gobion at Easter.

NCC: The County Travellers Unit deals with unauthorised encampments in public open space. 24hour response. Cllr Bainbridge is the Portfolio Officer.

8.2 Evenley Parish Council:

8.2.1 Electric Vehicle Charging Points: Have other Parishes considered installing these?

Croughton: Replacement of high and low voltage cables is underway. The low voltage cables are being replaced with a view to enabling access to charge points.

Aynho: The Council was interested in providing these in the older part of the village. Locations for the charge points needed to be identified or created.

SNC Local Plan specifies that new development must have Electric Vehicle Charge Points.

Alternative Power: Hydrogen?

8.2.2 Opening up future Ward meetings to include Hinton in the Hedges Parish Meeting and Newbottle Parish Council (Charlton):

This was viewed in a positive light but the Meeting agreed to await the results of the election in May 2021 before deciding how to proceed.

9. Parish News:

9.1 Aynho Parish Council:

An impressive community response to Covid-19. Good communications. Food parcels organised.

Since lockdown the sports pavilion and village hall had been upgraded.

Footway lighting installation completed. Energy bills significantly lower.

Twice weekly bus service provided by Ability Northants. Passes accepted.

Bio-diversity plans: Aim to encourage better use of common spaces, e.g. as wildflower meadows.

3rd Village survey: 90 Q&A, issues, positives, desires. Will chart progress and compare past feedback. 60% return at the start of lockdown. Presentation in Aynho Village Hall meeting in September (social distancing in place).

9.2 Croughton Parish Council:

Very pleasing village response to Covid-19. A group of 20 volunteers + Co-Ordinator assisted the vulnerable and elderly, and continue to do so.

Magnificent offer of Meals on Wheels. 300 free meals provided 7 days a week for 10 weeks.

Western Power Distribution: Replacement of high and low voltage cables throughout the village.

Mobile VAS: Installation scheduled in August subject to hedge problems being overcome.

Footbridge over ford at Mill Lane: Northants Highways to replace existing bridge with a plastic one with a 60year life span. Parish Council has requested details of the specification.

9.3 Evenley Parish Council:

Footway Lighting: BT will no longer agree to the bracketing of lamps to telegraph poles. A replacement footway lamp connected to a freestanding column would be required in future.

Pocket Park: Interested in creating a wildflower meadow.

Chicane: HS2 funded and installed.

Website Accessibility Standard compliance (23rd September 2020): Website to be refreshed and simplified.

Casual Vacancy: Departure of Cllr Ball.

Pandemic: The village pulled together tremendously well. Cricket on the village green has re-started.

Village green: Parking and litter problems (Pub Take-aways)

A43 essential roadworks: Better communications established with Highways England after concerns taken up by Hinton in the Hedges Parish Meeting and Evenley Parish Council re. road closures and diversions.

Projects: Speed limit reductions: Bicester Hill - A41; Church Road; road to Mixbury. Signage re. to HS2. Protection of edge of village green.

10. To set the date of the next Meeting to be held in January 2021 and hosted by Evenley Parish Council:

Monday 25th January 2021.

11. Chairman's Closing Remarks:

Cllr Tomlin thanked everyone for their attendance and looked forward to the next Ward meeting.

The Meeting ended at 8.49 p.m.