



## **EVENLEY** PARISH COUNCIL

www.evenleypc.org.uk

### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 at 7.30pm in Evenley Village Hall**

Present: Jean Morgan (Chair), Cathy Ellis, Jeff Peyton-Bruhl, Mike Baul, Lisa Proffitt, Nic Hamblin, Spencer Burnham, Elaine O'Leary (NACRE), Helen Howard (Northamptonshire Highways), Steve Pearce & Martin Seldon (Highways England), Kay Baul (Evenley Residents Association), Carrie O'Regan (Footpaths Warden, also representing Evenley Arts), Chris Scott & Richard Darby (Evenley Cricket Club), Keith Cousins (Gardening Society), Mel Bignell (South Northants Volunteer Bureau & Brackley Volunteer Car Service), Mark & Paula Jermy (Evenley Village Hall Committee).

Also present were some 25 parishioners.

#### **1) Apologies and welcome.**

- JM opened the meeting and explained the purpose of an annual parish meeting - a meeting for the whole community which is facilitated by the parish council and is chaired by the PC Chair if they are present, rather than a parish council meeting.
- Apologies were received from Kevin O'Regan, Cllr John Townsend and Mike Boshier. The new Clerk was unable to attend due to illness but she will be starting next week. Thanks to Kirsty Buttle for her work as Clerk over the previous 18 months.

#### **2) Disclosure of interests**

- No interests were declared.

#### **3) To receive and approve for signature the minutes of the meeting held on 20/04/15**

- The minutes were agreed and signed.

#### **4) Report from County Councillor Ron Sawbridge**

- Councillor Sawbridge provided the below report by e-mail:

I am going to start by clarifying the position relating to the reform of local government, and I shall follow this with some information about this year's budget and the services provided by the County Council.

The nation's indebtedness has resulted in a squeeze on all council finances over the last few years and this has particularly had an adverse effect on county councils. The amount received from the government by both Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire County Council by way of the Revenue Support Grant has been reducing every year. Both counties have been faced with a situation where income has been decreasing at a time when costs have been rising due to three main factors, the growing elderly population, the increase in the numbers of children in care, and an increasing general population.

The County Council has had to find innovative ways of improving efficiency and reducing costs by linking with other councils to share back room services like finance, legal, and human resources. This strategy has been very successful but has its limits and to achieve further cost reductions there is now an urgent need for a major reform of local government. We just can't afford to continue to have the County Council, the District Councils, and Parish Councils. This is a structure which is confusing to the public also extremely uneconomic. The removal of one tier of local government would result in savings by reducing bureaucracy and the costs of democratic decision making. A single council would be better able to meet the major challenges of a growing and ageing population, and also be better equipped to plan for the continuing growth in population by combining responsibility for housing, schools, planning, and transport. Such a council would reduce the number of CEOs and senior

managers who are duplicated across the current arrangements, it would greatly reduce the number of councillors all receiving allowances, and it would also lead to a better utilisation of the building stock.

We need to reform the system before the situation worsens. The government is scheduled to completely remove the present Revenue Support Grant by 2020 which will mean that if we do nothing there will be no money for anything other than care for the elderly, disabled, people with learning difficulties, and children in County Council care. These are the demand led services. Local government needs to be reformed in a way which will have a substantial and sustainable impact on costs while maintaining, or preferably improving, the services provided for the electorate.

Residents of both counties will have seen the proposal put forward by the District Councils in Oxfordshire to form four unitary authorities, the most northerly one comprising Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire. I would add here that this proposal was done in secret without reference to Northamptonshire County Council or Oxfordshire County Council. This would mean that the whole of south Northamptonshire, from Kings Sutton in the south to the border of Northampton Borough, would effectively become part of Oxfordshire. I doubt very much if this would receive much support from the residents of Northamptonshire as it could lead to a massive house building programme which would jeopardise the rural character of this part of Banburyshire. Also, I personally believe the creation of four unitary authorities would not solve the financial problem as each will require a Chief Executive Officer leading a team of directors and senior management, with considerable duplication of effort and costs across the county. What is required to solve the present crisis is the formation of unitary authorities large enough to result in a substantial and sustainable reduction in costs.

The seven Northamptonshire MPs have written to the leader of Northamptonshire County Council asking him, and I quote *"to start the process of considering options for unitary authorities in our county and a re-organisation of local Government in Northamptonshire. We want local councils that can meet the simultaneous challenges of increased demand for services and reduced funding, and we believe that simplified local government in the form of unitary authorities provides the opportunity to achieve that"*. As a result Northamptonshire County Council has commissioned independent research into the options for the reform of local government. In doing this it is very important that the process involves participation by the County Council, the Borough of Northampton, the six District Councils, and all the Parish Councils. The report on this research will be available in the summer and this will then lead to consultation with the residents of Northamptonshire.

Turning now to the budget for the financial year just started, the County Council is responsible for the services which are covered by over 70% of the council tax paid by residents. Two of the main services are Adult Social Care, and Services for Children and Families, with a combined budgeted net cost of £275m. All the other services have a combined net cost of £140m and include the Fire and Rescue Service, Highways, Trading Standards, Parks, the Libraries and the Record Office, Waste Management, and the cost of running the Local Government Shared Services (LGSS). To cover the increased cost of running these services the County Council part of your council tax has increased by 3.95%. This includes a special allowance of 2% to be spent specifically to help meet the rising cost of providing social care for the elderly and disabled.

Finally, I have to report on how I allocated my £7,000 Empowering Councillors' Allowance in 2015/16. This was as follows: £2,500 towards the cost of a footway at Upper Astrop Road, Kings Sutton; £2,000 towards the cost of a new Children's Play Park at Farthinghoe; £1,500 towards the cost of a Vehicle Activated Sign at Aynho; £1,000 to cover the distribution cost of 'Cheney Chatter' to residents in Middleton Cheney.

## **5) Opportunity to speak with representatives including:**

- Evenley Cricket Club
- South Northants Volunteer Bureau regarding Brackley Volunteer Car Service
- Evenley Gardening Society
- Evenley Film Club
- Evenley Residents Association
- Evenley Matters
- Evenley Parish Council
- Northamptonshire Highways
- Highways England
- Northamptonshire ACRE
- Evenley Village Hall Committee
- Evenley Parish Wardens

An informal session was held allowing parishioners to talk informally with these representatives.

Meeting closed 21.15.

### **Report from Brackley Safer Community Team**

Unfortunately a member from the team was unable to attend the meeting, therefore a report was sent in:

#### **Evenley**

Burglary Dwelling – 1  
Theft/Handling – 2  
Burglary Other – 1  
Theft from motor vehicle – 2  
Violence offences – 2

With regards to crime in general, there has been an emerging issue relating to Theft of purses from persons using Supermarkets. Therefore we are asking member of the public to be vigilant when using such locations and to report any suspicious circumstances by dialling 101, the non-emergency telephone number.

Northants Police also supports local social networks such as 'Brackley Gossip Girls', 'Brackley Burglary Crime & Prevention', 'Northamptonshire Street Watch', 'Newbottle and Charlton Crime Prevention Group' and other village networks by providing information and advice for circulation. We recognise the value of these pages for keeping a two-way flow of information between the Police and the public and are very grateful to the administrators of each site who keep this going. The handbag thefts recently have proved the value of these sites.

The above sites have proved very popular and all communicate with each other to increase their effectiveness. Every village/community within the South Northants area would benefit from developing a similar Facebook site to continue to expand this network of information and make the area less attractive for criminals. It is acknowledged that there are a lot of people who do not use social media and persons who administer the existing sites provide information to their local Neighbourhood Watch schemes for distribution via email or other methods.

If you are interested in developing a similar site for your area please take a look at the above mentioned pages for examples of content and rules and for more information please contact:

**Brackley Sector villages – Sergeant Michaela SIMONS** via  
micki.simons@northants.pnn.police.uk

The Police website also contains pages for your local area and you will find further crime prevention and personal safety advice. The Northamptonshire Police website can be accessed via:

<http://www.northants.police.uk/#!/SouthNorthantsBrackley>

Members of the public can also contact the Police in confidence, via 999 in an emergency, 101 for non-emergency.

If you have some concerns and want to arrange to speak directly to a local Brackley officer then contact us via our email address: SCT-SouthNorthantsBrackley@northants.police.uk

Follow us on Twitter: @BrackleySctSgt or visit the Northants Police website for updates, events and local team details: <http://www.northants.police.uk/#!/SouthNorthantsBrackley>

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