

MINUTES OF THE DINGLEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1st MAY 2019 AT 7.30 PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

1 Present

Councillors: B Jones (Chairman), R Hinxman, M Anderson and S Dudson

In Attendance:

Mrs J Medwell – Clerk
Fiona Barnaby (Village Hall Committee)
6 members of the public

Apologies: Cllr E Whitesides and Borough Cllr D Howes

2 The Annual Report of the Parish Council 2017-18

The Chairman welcomed the visitors and gave the following report.

“ Each year the Parish Council (PC) is required to hold an Annual Village Meeting, to report to the community what actions the Council has taken over the year, and to invite discussion of issues affecting the village and how the PC and the community might approach them. We are fortunate in Dingley to have several organisations in such a small village: the PC, the Village Hall Committee (VHC), the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and special groups such as Friends of Dingley Park (FODP) and Neighbourhood watch (NW). To repeat a point I made last year, in a way the ‘internal’ affairs of the village are the concern of the VHC, while the PC can be seen as a channel of communication with outside organisations and agencies. These include our neighbouring Welland Valley villages, local government (Kettering BC and Northamptonshire CC), Harborough District Council, groups such as the Northamptonshire association of local councils, County Highways, Police, the local MP, and so on. We also keep an eye on the larger politics – especially the major changes in the County with the likely change to ‘Unitary Status’ – the abolition of borough councils such as Kettering and their replacement with two large authorities for the county. These changes will have a significant impact on parishes such as ours since the new authority will be more remote, and thus the PC will have an important role. The PC has little power, but is recognised by these bodies who consult us on many issues – planning, highways, policing, and so on. Where we are invited to comment we are listened to and can influence decisions.

Specific topics for this annual report include:

Highways

This was identified as the most important issue in the recent Village Survey: noise, nuisance, traffic density, speeding and indeed potential dangers. Highways are a County responsibility, and the work is outsourced to a contractor. Last year I reported that this contractor had visited us and spent several hours walking the roads and discussing with us what might be possible as

improvements. These are relatively few, as the A427 is both a trunk road and a designated route for emergency vehicles. But some improvements were made, such as improved signage on Braybrooke Road and Sutton Lane. When available we make use of the Police Community Speedwatch camera, with a team of volunteers led by Cllr Maureen Anderson.

We were successful in supporting a complaint about excess noise and loose gravel after the resurfacing of the A427 was carried out. Highways agreed to remove the new cats' eyes and to sweep the gravel – which has improved things for householders along that stretch of the main road.

Another improvement we were able to make has been the clearing of vegetation along the main road. We budgeted for this and the result has been an improvement in both accessibility along the roadside footways and also the appearance of the village. We have now agreed with the contractor that this will be a year-round maintenance of the verges. This, together with the annual litter pick, keeps our village looking smart and importantly keep footways clear for pedestrian and wheelchair access.

On a related footway issue, we submitted a request to County Highways to extend the roadside footway from the village to the A6 roundabout. This is beyond current resources, but the support of the Parish Council and County Councillor Matthews can be linked with Highways towards this aim so that this extension to the footway could then be put into a future bid when the appropriate funding does again become available.

Parish Councils are responsible for any capital assets they own. In our case this means the two bus shelters and the non-bus shelter on Church Lane. Last year we secured a grant from Kettering BC to refurbish these shelters, and during this year's litter pick (which was well attended – thanks to everyone) the glass in the bus shelters was very thoroughly cleaned by Maureen and Graham Anderson. Our only other 'asset' is the defibrillator, now installed and running on the Village Hall Wall. A first-aid training event in the Village Hall is planned for June.

Transport

Related to bus shelters is of course public transport. We have nothing further to report here, though there is quite a groundswell nationally of anxiety about rural public transport and it might become an election issue next year.

Planning

All village planning applications are sent to the PC. We have no power over these, but we are invited to comment and recommend, and our views are taken seriously by the Planning Department. An important aspect of our role is that we are in a position to comment on the impact of proposed plans on the community as a whole.

Vacancies

Over the last several years I have reported that we have a vacancy on the PC. We were very sorry at the departure from the village of Cllr Alan Garratt. Alan was a tireless and vigilant worker for the village, and we wish him and Lesley well in their new home in Lincolnshire.

But I'm delighted to say we now have a full complement (5) of councillors. Elaine Whitesides has joined us and we look forward to her contribution to the PC.

But do keep in mind that there is a turnover in Parish Councillors and we may have vacancies in the future. Also – although he was not a councillor– we owe thanks to Iain Dilley for his excellent steering of FODP – now taken on by Steve Dudson. We wish Iain and his family well in their new home in North Wales.

Data Protection

This is an important safeguard for the public but has also become a headache for any organisation with mailing or membership lists. Please bear with us if, for example, we ask for you permission to include you on an emails list.

Conclusion

The PC is more important than ever in these difficult times when support and resources from local government are reducing, and there is major turbulence in the structure and organisation of local government, while central government has its eyes on Europe. Increasingly we find local responsibilities are delegated - cutting grass verges, even policing. So there are ever greater demands on your PC.

We would like to thank

Borough Councillor David Howes, County Councillor Allan Matthews, our Parish Clerk Justina Medwell for her invaluable support and guidance and the Village Hall Committee

My personal thanks are due to my fellow councillors and to everyone in the village who has helped us.”

3 A Financial Report of the Parish Council 2017/18

The Clerk presented the financial statement at 31st March 2018 (see attached).

4 (i) Village Hall Annual Report

Fiona Barnaby gave the following report

“ Monthly social events continue, well supported by villagers. For the 12 months from July 2018 all profits will be donated to the church roof fund. The VH is also supporting the PCC in several of their fund raising events.

VH refurbishment continues. The hall has been painted both inside and out. For this we have to thank not only the usual committee members but give special thanks to Shaun Noon. The Alan Tidy Porch is now completed over the entrance door. Work continues on the lighting including the emergency exit lights and a security light at the entrance. The photographs have been re framed and hung.

The committee is currently looking into purchasing (hopefully with the aid of a grant from the Capital Community Grant Scheme) a projector and screen for showing sports events and the ever popular race night DVD.

We have introduced a 'Friends of the Committee' role, these are villagers who are happy to help out with events and schemes. They are welcomed to the committee meetings. We would be pleased to see more villagers attending our meetings, you also would be made most welcome.

The treasurer has had a hard time coping with errant electricity and water suppliers who seem incapable of sending correct and timely bills to such small users as ourselves I believe he has now beaten them into submission. Our next major agenda item is the years insurance for the Hall. As with everything else in life this becomes increasingly involved and complicated. We may have to pay additional one off premiums for such as the Bonfire Night Celebrations.

I would like to thank all the committee for their hard work over the past 12 months, for both the time and energy that maintaining, organising and running the Hall and events involves. In particular we must give Bruce Smith a special thank you for his never ending work maintaining and improving the Hall. Is there nothing that man won't turn his hand to? (Yes his wife's job list!)"

4(ii) Neighbourhood Watch Report

Simon Edwards gave the following report

"The NHW messaging system <http://www.northantsnhw.co.uk> now means that we are GDPR compliant - Note that individuals are liable to criminal charges not NHW! Paperwork is being minimized where possible to reduce risk. In the interests of the environment the quarterly newsletter from Northampton NHW is now sent out as a PDF email attachment, I receive a minimum number for those not on email. It was not very useful anyway. Much of the electronic alerts on the NHW messaging system are not relevant to us. If you are one of the twelve that use this <http://www.northantsnhw.co.uk> portal then please tweak your own preferences. I only manually forward things that I consider worthy to the 39 people that are not users. You can still click unsubscribe if you don't want these from me, it all runs on the portal. Four NHW signs are available for fitting, larger than expected. The opportunity to go out and fit these has been slim.

4 (iii) Friends of Dingley Park Report

Cllr Dudson gave the following report

“The FODP scheme for 2019 is once again up and running.

Since taking over the scheme from Iain Dilley last autumn, I have had a meeting with the land agent for the owner stating that I wish all previous issues be erased and that I start with a clean slate. The most important one being that everyone within the Parish is able to join the FODP.

With this agreed, I have made very slight amendments to the T&C's, produced the application forms, arranged for the printing of the entrance gate signage c/w the essential Rules, produce new membership cards, opened a bank account and via various mediums promoted the scheme.

However, disappointingly so far there have only been 13 households that have joined the scheme.

On talking to various despondent people, this scheme has gone from being open for 12 months to now being restricted to only 4-5 months between the Easter and August bank holidays.

Even though the funds this time do go back into the community, the period restriction and £25 cost are not attractive.

Therefore, I shall soon be approaching the land agent to request a justifiable extension to the ‘open’ period. If at this first attempt I am not successful, then I will halve all new membership fees and those that have already paid for 2019 will be given 2020 free of any further charges.

5 Local Issues

Matters raised were footpaths and Bluebell Wood. Residents were advised that any issues relating to footpaths and roads can be reported online to Northamptonshire County Council through ‘Fix My Street’

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm

Signed..... Dated.....

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