

MINUTES of the meeting of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 24th May 2018

Present: G. Matthews (Chair), D. Fettes (DF), P. Lawrence (PL), I. Hogg (IH), C. Frost (CF), Harry St John (Parish and District Councillor) (HSJ) and L. Walker (County Councillor) (LW)

In attendance : Allison Leigh (Clerk) (AL), Stephen Hookham, Paul Burgum, members of the public

1. Apologies for absence: Andy Clements, Susie Cusick

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 25th May 2017: The minutes were approved and signed with a request that copies of the minutes be distributed to all attendees at the meeting.

3. Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

4. Thames Valley Police Report – Stephen Hookham: Stephen Hookham (SH) of Thames Valley Police (TVP) presented an update. He talked about the Neighbourhood Policing Team which covers Chipping Norton to Carterton as well Kidlington. TVP will have been operating with this model for a year as of June 2018. TVP has looked at efficiency measures and how to distribute resources. TVP looks at where the demand is and allocates resources accordingly.

There is a response team, an investigation team and a neighbourhood team. The 4 pillars of the neighbourhood team are visibility, engagement, community resilience and problem solving. TVP works with the Community Resilience Forums (formerly known as Neighbourhood Action Groups – NAGS).

HSJ asked about the 7% increase in the precept for TVP. SH indicated that TVP go where the demand is so if the demand is in a certain area, there will be more presence than an area where there isn't.

A question arose as to Speedwatch. SH indicated he is working toward the allowance of speed guns in Speedwatch groups again. SH is to get back tot HSJ with information on this as well as a contact.

It was noted that there is not currently a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in North Leigh.

5. Accounts for 2017/2018 – Allison Leigh: AL reported that the accounts for 2017/2018 have been completed and reviewed by the internal auditor who has deemed them in order and ready to send to the external auditor. The council approved and signed the accounts the week of June 4th, I will be posting the Notice of Public Rights. This will have my contact details should anyone wish to review the accounts within the period designated on the form.

The council opened with a balance of £43,095 and ended with a balance to carry over of £57,963. The council was under budget.

The 2018/2019 budget was approved at the December meeting with a precept set for £37921, which is the same as 2017/2018.

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7. Report by the Memorial Hall Trustees – Paul Burgum: Paul Burgum (PB) reported that the trustees are the same as last year. The objectives are the same as well. The change in the past year is that the charitable status has changed to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The hall continues to hold fundraisers as well as house the library, youth centre and post office/shop.

The lettings income was in line with the budget and increased by £500.

Expenditure exceeded income due to legal funds for the CIO.

The hall is well used but needs work. This year £3,000 was spent on roof lights. There was also an unexpected drain issue which cost approximately £1400.

There are no large plans for the coming year.

A question was raised as to whether Paul could put a notice in the Nor'Lye news regarding the new charitable statues. The council thanked Paul for all he has done.

8. Report by Village Charities – Carol Frost: CF reported that the charities started in 1675 and have played a key role in helping those in need in the village. This year the charities send £12 at Christmas to 40 elderly people who are on their own in the village as a small gift. The charities can help anyone in the community such as a school child needing help for funding a school trip. The charities cannot fund items for which a government service could help.

There is currently £5000 in hand.

9. Report by County Councillor – Liam Walker

LW reported that it has been his first full year as County Councillor. He highlights some key issues of North Leigh throughout the year.

Virgin Media worked to lay cabling for their network. There were several issues in workmanship and LW ensured the work was stopped until the issues were corrected, which they were.

The Bellway development has created some issues to be worked on such as road widening and footpaths.

The 233 bus service now runs every 30 minutes. There needs to be a better link with the train station.

LW talked about potholes and how they are not too bad in North Leigh. He is working at ensuring all potholes within in close proximity of each other are fixed rather than fixing one and then coming back for others. There is a pothole policy being reviewed at the moment as well as specialized machinery for potholes.

LW talked about rubbish collection and indicated that WODC collect the rubbish and OCC dispose of it. Recycling is down to 2% (?) and the county is looking to get fly away plastics recycled.

A question was raised by the public with regards to a roundabout in Witney where the lines are not clear. LW will take a look into it.

An issue was raised as to the road surface on New Yatt Road. There are no repairs in the pipeline to be done on New Yatt Road.

LW indicated the platform at the train station would be extended by the end of this year.

An issue was raised about the 233 bus not stopping in New Yatt. LW indicated he is aware of this, but that not enough passengers travel on the bus to justify the additional stop. He indicated that he is prepared to put pressure on Stagecoach but can't promise anything. IH expresses concern about the isolation of rural areas.

10. Report by District Councillor – Harry St John:

HSJ reported that he is hopeful the inspector will report on the Local Plan which the District council can then adopt and defend against development.

HSJ talked about the Joint Spatial Strategy plan being drafted by the Oxford Growth Board which is formed by members of the 6 different councils and others. The draft JSS is now being worked on and will hopefully be adopted by 2020/2021. IH asked if this would go to public consultation and HSJ indicated it would. HSJ indicated that each District will still have its own local plan.

The WODC budget has balanced this year and the council tax has gone up by 2.5% and is still one of the lowest in the country.

HSJ highlighted the issue of rural isolation in WODC despite the south east of England being more densely populated. Many areas in WODC still had poor bus services – North Leigh is comparatively well served but East End and Wilcote were isolated and had no bus service as was the case in many other rural villages. There are some community buses being established which are increasingly popular.

HSJ talked about the launch of Publica, a Company wholly owned WODC, Cheltenham, Forest of Dean and Cotswold District and this company provides all the services to these Councils and employs most of the Councils former employees. This Company has been established after ten years of the councils working together and sharing more and more common tasks. In turn this has led to significant overhead costs savings for all four Councils.

There is now a new contract with Ubico (part of Publica) for waste collection in WODC which started last October. There were some initial teething problems which have largely been resolved apart some more isolated locations in rural locations.

HSJ indicated WODC issues a newsletter twice a year called Creating Futures

HSJ reported that WODC has committed to completion of the Broadband rollout by the end of 2018/9 with 99% of the district being able to have decent connectivity. Work is ongoing around numerous rural villages.

HSJ discussed Thames Water and his and others ongoing concern about foul drainage capacity in all the villages including North Leigh which are served by one STW at Church Hanborough especially in the light of with the additional housing development proposed in the villages. He is awaiting a response from TW.

An issue was raised about the affect on residents along New Yatt Road with the amount of dust being raised during building works, mud on road in wet conditions and noise/early morning start times. And HGVs on Park Road.. HSJ is liaising with planners and Bellway site managers.

11. Report by Chairman of Parish Council – Greg Matthews: GM talked about the developments in the parish and there are more houses to come from Rectory Homes. The development at the nursery will be coming before the council.

The Local Plan has room for 4,000 houses in Witney North. GM indicated it is a possibility Rectory Homes will put in for more development.

GM reported that Speedwatch has been curtailed as of the time of the meeting per an e-mail from TVP stating that the radar gun cannot be used. As noted earlier, HSJ is going to follow up with SH from TVP.

GM indicated the council has new grass cutting contracts in the village.

GM reported the lease for the Adventure Playground has been renewed. We are waiting for OCC to respond to the council with regards to the school playground lease. There has been more controversy over this lease due to a 5-year break clause. GM indicated the council is looking into resurfacing the school playground.

GM reported that the Spring Clean had been a success with 14 bags of rubbish being collected and 54 helpers participated, 30 of whom were young people. The sign cleaning was also a success.

GM reported that East End will be getting Gigaclear shortly and that New Yet will be waiting a bit longer for faster broadband.

GM reported that the PC had agreed to support North Leigh Library for another year. There is a Friend of North Leigh Library group.

GM reported on the hard work that Rachel Livingstone has been doing to re-establish footpaths that might be lost if they are not on OCC's definitive map by 2026. He thanked her for her help on this.

A question was raised as to the state of the hedge by Hereford House. AL to look into this.

12. Open Session: A member of the public enquired as to the Neighbourhood Plan. GM reported that the PC is intending to do a survey to gauge interest. If there is interest, then the council is happy to assist in enabling a group that wishes to take on the project.

The meeting closed at 9:05 pm.