

Northmoor Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 27 May 2015
Northmoor Village Hall

Parishioners Present

Councillors Valerie Ryan and Peter Winder, Clerk Michael Ryan, Julie Thorne, Alison Taylor, Maureen Sears, Jenni Metcalf, John Waterfield, Graeme Ogilvie, Julie and Perry Hankey.

Also in Attendance.

PCSO Helen Keen, County Councillor Charles Mathew, District Councillor Steve Good and Ruth Lapworth of Volunteer Link-up.

Apologies

There were apologies from Parish Council Chairman Graham Shelton, Caroline Wheatley, and the Revd. Tweedy and his wife.

Meeting Chairman

Parish Councillor Robert Florey chaired the Meeting.

Item 2: Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2014.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2014 were read to the meeting and signed as a true record.

Item 3: Chairman's Report.

The Chairman thanked the Parish Councillors and Clerk for the work they had done over the past year, and also our County and District Councillors for their work and regular attendance at Parish Council meetings.

The Parish Council has met 11 times in 2014/15 and Parish Councillors attendance has averaged 93%.

Parishioners in attendance have been as low as 1 and as high as 16, an average attendance of 6 per meeting.

We have also had County Councillor Charles Mathew present for nine meetings, and District Councillors Hilary Fenton and Steve Good together attending six of the eleven meetings.

Among matters considered

Planning: There have been 7 Planning Applications. The most significant of these again being the outline permission granted for eight houses at Park Farm coming back to the Council for full planning for fifteen. The Parish Council The main concern was not the

increase in number, as the mix of housing types was more acceptable, but the poor access from the development onto Standlake Road.

Two single new dwelling applications, also on Standlake Road, were opposed by the PC and refused by the District.

Gravel: The Gravel Liaison Group has met twice since the last Annual Parish Meeting. There has been an application for a concrete batching plant at Dix Pit to process aggregate when Stonehenge starts to quarry, now expected at the end of 2016.

Roads: The state of the roads is regularly reported to OCC. New passing places have been made in Moreton Lane and the road resurfaced from Newbridge to Moreton.

Precept: The Parish Precept this year was essentially unchanged from last year at £4460.

Allotments. There are no unused allotments at the present time. The allotments continue to cover the cost to the Parish of the rent and water rates. The statement last year that they would benefit from forming an allotment association to look after the interests of the holders and gather support for maintaining those parts of common land such as the perimeter that have become somewhat neglected was not fulfilled.

Playing Field. This continues to be the largest expenditure for monies from the Precept.

Schools. The Eynsham Partnership Academy was formed in 2014 that includes the primary schools of Standlake and Stanton Harcourt. The free school transport to Bartholomew for new pupils from Standlake will no longer be provided, the County will be making a charge from September 2015, but this does not apply for children from Northmoor.

Item 4: Thames Valley Police Report

Community PCSO Helen Keen attended the meeting and gave a report on the year. The Report showed there were three recorded crimes in the year, two being theft of tools and one of criminal damage to a lamppost that was probably accidental but not reported.

The neighbourhood policing team consists of Sgt Liz Bell, PC Martyn McHale, PCSO Helen Keen and newly appointed PCSO Sandra Syphas. Sandra will be largely responsible for work within the villages, with Helen working mainly in Eynsham.

PCSO Syphas will be working to get to know the area and the people in it. She would like to see a more widespread use of **Smartwater** to protect residents' property from Thieves.

The Chairman thanked Helen and the Community Police Team for their work within the community.

Item 5: An Explanation of the Work of Volunteer Link-up.

Parish Councillor Peter Winder spoke of the concerns expressed within the recent village appraisal over public transport and his efforts to get a minibus to service the residents of Northmoor. This did not get the necessary support of OCC and he has therefore looked at other choices, these included the service co-ordinated by Volunteer Link-up that encouraged and supported Good Neighbourhood Schemes. Peter then

introduced Ruth Lapworth of Volunteer Link-up, who described the scheme that they broker enlisting volunteers from within the community to provide transport, so as to allow residents who do not have private transport of their own to fulfil appointments in a convenient way at a modest cost. By acting as the coordinator in these arrangements they remove the embarrassment of unwanted commitments from volunteers in providing the service.

Item 6. Reports from County and District Councillors.

County Councillor Charles Mathew reported on the topics that had engaged him most in 2014/15 including public transport, gravel, Newbridge and Thames Water.

- Public Transport. For this community the level of rural bus subsidies were under review, and this could affect the bus coming through Northmoor, either in frequency or at all. There was a public consultation to seek the views of local residents.
- Gravel. Charles was critical of the support of OCC for Stonehenge, and more recently the prospect of a cement batching plant at Dix Pit that would be for six years minimum, and more likely then.
- Newbridge. The camera does not work and the threat alone is not effective in stopping HGVs going over the bridge. Charles believed OCC should be doing more to protect this bridge that is not only an ancient monument but also an essential route for local residents travelling south.
- Thames Water. A monopoly service that was not doing enough to serve the interests of the local community.

District Councillor Steve Good, serving on five committees of the District Council, including Development and Control, Lowlands Planning, Licensing, Finance Overview and Scrutiny. Steve spoke of the continued financial support for the CAB, the continued policy of free car parking and the local district tax that again has shown no increase.

Item 7. Update from Northmoor Lockkeeper Mark Winks

Mark reported on the successful introduction of lightweight paddles for controlling the water flow over the weir at the lock. The original paddles posed a risk to health and safety for lockkeepers who have to manhandle them in difficult weather conditions and the new paddles reduced this risk. He also reported on his trials of maintaining the water level in the Thames below the accepted datum level, to assist drainage off the surrounding fields and lessen the flood risk. As a result of his work this was being replicated at other lock to assess whether this is effective. Work being currently undertaken included trimming trees on the banks of the river above Newbridge.

Item 8. Reports from the PCC and Village Hall Committee

Henry Hereford for the PCC, spoke of *the first year of the new Rector, Drew Tweedy, who has settled in well to the job of looking after the four parishes of the Lower Windrush Benefice. His wife Billie, a licensed Lay Minister, regularly takes services, preaches and gives communion. Between them they serve as Governors of Stanton Harcourt and Standlake schools.*

While keeping the more traditional forms of service, Drew and Billy have also introduced new ideas – non-church services at the Ferryman Inn at Bablockhythe (with live pop music, dramatic readings etc), Taizé services at Stanton Harcourt, and Messy Church (for young families) at Standlake; Billie has incorporated a play for children in the Easter service, and devised a Blessing the Animals service in church (we had five dogs, a rabbit and a toy frog).

They have also held Family Services at the Sheltons' and Floreys' farms, which have attracted a lot of children. Numbers attending church regularly are on the whole slightly down on last year (in line with national trends), but for special services the church has been full to bursting – 100 on Easter Day, 250 for Remembrance, 375 for the two Carol Services on Christmas Eve. The choir is in good heart, with 15-20 regular members, singing the monthly choral service and the carol services.

Members of the congregation are active in the village community. The Thursday Club for old people is run by church members from Northmoor and Stanton Harcourt. Church members organize the Harvest Lunch, and help to organize the Community Shopping Morning, the Flower and Produce Show and Fete, the History Festival, the Christmas Shopping Evening etc, and are represented on the Village Hall and Red Lion committees and the Parish Council. Visits are made to the sick, the bereaved and the housebound. Donations to charity last year totaled £1230.

The church building had its 5-yearly inspection in January. It is basically in good repair, but the Chancel roof urgently needs to be replaced. The church has been awarded a grant of £36,700 by the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund, and is claiming back the VAT on the project cost of around £72,000. The church has savings of around £14,000 in the Chancel Repair Fund, and can allocate more if need be from the Fabric Fund. The PCC has applied to other trusts for further help, and all fundraising this year is being focused on this job. Any contributions or fundraising ideas would be most welcome. It is hoped to get the job done by the end of the year.

Quite apart from that, the Treasurer points out that the basic annual running costs of the church are around £14,000: the Parish Share (the contribution to the Diocese and Benefice) £11,400, insurance £2,300, heating and lighting £500, plus other miscellaneous expenses. The generosity of those who support the church with time, skills and money is greatly appreciated; any further offers of help would be most welcome.

Graeme Ogilvie, newly elected Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, reported that they had made an application for financial support from the WODC. The total monies wanted were in the region of £25,000 to carry out essential repairs and improvements, these works would deplete the hall reserves to zero, and further applications to organizations that give financial support to village halls were being made. Other ways to generate revenue to support the Hall were necessary and being investigated.

Item 9. Open Item for Parishioners. There were no matters raised.

Item 10. Brief Summaries from other Groups.

OUTRAGE: Julie Hanky gave the background to the group, and said that after so many years of essentially unchanged leadership the group needed refreshing and several people had come forward to offer their support. Currently the County's plan going forward for minerals was soon to be published and the Group needed to be able to respond.

Annual Flower Show: Julie Thorne spoke for Maureen Sears to say the show takes place this year in the morning of Sunday 30 August, and combines with the Annual Village fete that will be held at the Red Lion. It was proposed that produce entered for the show would be auctioned to add to the funds raised.

Venturers: A report had been received from Nick Bourke.

The Venturers have been back up and running since end of April, we are looking to run for the summer months until the clocks change. At present the club is open to all village children and all costs are being covered by the youth club. Tuesday evenings will see the Children take

part in various activities from sports to crafts. The club has plans to hold an event or two throughout the year to ensure that the club can continue to affiliate itself with Oxfordshire Youth and also ensure that it complies with the legislation.

Caroline will remain at the front of the club ensuring that the children have plenty of opportunities to engage in some valuable activities helping to develop important life skills, from being part of a local community group to forging relationships with people of various ages. Under the leadership of Chris the club was heavily geared towards outdoor activities especially around water. Unfortunately the ability to continue on in this direction is proving difficult, mainly due to lack of instructors and costs associated with maintenance insurance etc. One of the avenues that is currently being explored is allowing the canoes to be used and maintained by Standlake & Cokethorpe Sea-scouts with them giving a number of sessions for our children to take up. This will also help us to maintain the commitment that Chris negotiated with Charles Mathew when funding was given over two years ago.

At present this is a staged approach to getting the youth club back up and running at first during the summer months with the plan to restore the club to all year, this is the aim, but at the moment unachievable due to workloads and commitments. As you will all agree this is a much better position than not having the club running at all and our thanks go out to Caroline the committee and of course the children.

In respect of the item in the report on the use of the canoes by Standlake and Cokethorpe Sea-scouts, Councillor Mathew said that if this takes place no money should be charged as they were purchased with a grant from his Community Fund.

There being no further business the Annual Parish Meeting was closed and those present enjoyed some cheese and wine to end the evening.

Signed.....

Date.....