

## **Minutes of the Northmoor Annual Parish Meeting Held on Tuesday 19 March 2024 at 7:00pm in the Village Hall**

### **Attendees**

Parish Council  
Dr Graham Shelton            Chair  
Mr Neil Reeves  
Miss Stacey Reed  
Mrs Juliet Druce  
Mrs Carrie Berry  
Mr Chris Isaac                Clerk

WODC Cllr Lysette Nicholls

17 members of the public including presenters

### **Apologies for absence**

OCC Cllr Dan Levy, WODC Cllr Charlie Maynard, 4 members of the public.

### **Welcome and Report from Northmoor Parish Council**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and then gave his report, which is included at the end of the minutes.

### **Speed limits in the Parish**

Neil Reeves spoke on behalf of Mrs Lucy Adams regarding the speed of vehicles travelling along the Standlake Road between The Park Farm development and Northmoor.

The Clerk briefed the meeting on Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) Pre-Consultation on their proposed changes to the existing speed limits, which would see the current 40mph limits be reduced to 30mph and the current 30mph limits reduced to 20mph, with no other changes. The Parish Council had challenged this and requested that they consider reducing the speed limit on all of the single-track lanes in the Parish from the National Speed Limit, however OCC's response was not as we had hoped:

*Regarding the 30mph extension on Church Rd, Standlake Rd and the road leading to Moreton. Unfortunately these roads do not align with our 20mph policy and therefore won't be able to include these within our proposals. The reason for not doing so in this case and other similar situations is not because we would not wish to reduce traffic speeds along here but rather that we do not believe a lower limit will have any measurable effect on speeds. The more extensively we implement lower limits the less chance we have of them being respected where they are most likely to reduce speeds such as in the more built-up areas and a lower posted speed limit could also make matters worse by providing a false sense of security to pedestrians.*

Lysette Nicholls said that there was already precedence in Oxfordshire as South Leigh had reduced 60mph roads, so she would liaise with Dan Levy.

The residents present believed that the real issue was the 60mph stretches and that was supported by the results of the 2023 Village Survey.

### **Flooding and Emergency Plan**

Juliet Druce briefed the meeting on the following points:

- The Emergency Plan has now been updated and is ready for publication.
- We need volunteers with equipment that would be useful in a disaster such as 4x4 vehicles, tractors, chainsaws etc.
- The defibrillators at Bablock Hythe and Northmoor are both serviceable.
- Flooding in the parish, particularly Bablock Hythe has been particularly bad this winter, with 11 flood alerts so far this winter.

Further discussion followed between the residents, noting that whilst 2008 was a worse year both 2022 and 2023 have been almost as bad. Any issues with the bank of the various streams are the responsibility of the Riparian owners, but as the river has been in flood there is nowhere for the water to go. There are various flood prevention projects in the pipeline, but these are likely to concentrate on the larger populations.

### **Community Pub Report**

Graham Ogilvie and Andrew Williams gave a slide presentation on the Red Lion Pub which has been included as pictures at the end of the minutes.

There were concerns raised regarding the timing of the adverts for new tenants, and what would happen in the event of nobody suitable being found. The advert went out after Christmas as most tenants are looking to move soon, and if nobody suitable was found then the pub would remain closed.

Lysette Nicholls noted that Appleton had held an Interim Inn in their Village Hall on a Friday night. Julie Williams said that the VH has an alcohol licence and so that would be a possibility. Graham Shelton added that the pub had previously been closed for a long period and that had not affected its popularity on re-opening.

### **Village Hall Report**

Julie Williams gave a slide presentation on the Village Hall which has been included as pictures at the end of the minutes.

Andrew Williams added that the VH was a charity that was running on a very limited budget.

### **Church Report**

Micael Druce read out a report from Henry Herford who was unable to attend. The report can be found at the end of the minutes. He also added that the Harvest Lunch would be held on Sunday 13 October.

### **Playground Committee Report**

Fiona Florey presented the Play Park report that can be found at the end on the minutes.

There was concern raised that the push for funding the Play Park could be taking potential funds from the other village assets, such as the Church and Village Hall. It was noted that most of the funding was coming from sponsorship and whilst the push was on for the Playground it was time limited and it was hoped that afterwards the events that had been well supported by the parish could be continued for the other areas that needed funds.

It was also noted that 25 years ago there had been a similar push to fund the Village Hall build so this was possibly not such an issue.

There was a question regarding ownership and onward maintenance. The Parish Council is responsible for the upkeep of the Playground, but doesn't have the power to raise the capital to procure the new equipment. Fiona added that it was hoped that sufficient funds would be raised to cover the next 15 years' worth of inspection and maintenance.

*Post meeting note: If insufficient funds are raised inspections and maintenance will need to be covered by the Precept which would result in it being increased.*

## **PCSO Report**

The Chair read a brief report from the PCSO, Helen Keen who was unable to attend the meeting. There have been 10 incidents that have occurred in Northmoor over the last 6 months:

- 2 incidents of Sudden Death
- 2 Road Related Incidents
- 2 RTC – Non-recordable Injury
- 1 Concern For Safety
- 1 Offensive Weapon
- 1 Action Fraud
- 1 Burglary Residential

## **First & Last Report**

The Chair read out notes by David Miles from First and Last as he was unable to attend the meeting. The notes are at the end of the minutes.

## **Thursday Club Report**

Michael Druce spoke about the Thursday Club, the main points were:

- The Village Hall hosts the Lunch Club every Thursday and is open to elderly, lonely residents of the Lower Windrush Benefice.
  - At the moment there are 30 members and is running at full capacity.
  - The cooking is done by volunteers who are paid for the cost of the food. There are currently six cooks, six regular helpers, and four drivers.
  - Any offers of help and membership enquiries to Michael Druce on 300480 or [druce.michael@yahoo.com](mailto:druce.michael@yahoo.com).
  - The cost of Lunch to members is £5. (£6 to include a glass of wine)
- Meetings are held at The Ferryman Inn if the Village Hall is unavailable or there are staff shortages
- It would be better if other villages offered similar schemes on different days, then folk could maybe get 3 meals a week.

## **Village Events - Fête, Flower and Produce Show, Harvest Lunch**

It was suggested that the Fete be held on the same day as the produce show to make it more appealing. Last year there had been a clash of dates with the Standlake Produce Show which must be avoided this year. (It is believed that the Standlake Show will be on 8 September this year).

## **AOB**

There was no AOB and so the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution.

## **Chair's Report for period Jan 23 to Mar 24**

The Parish Council has met 14 times in 2023 and 2024 Parish Councillor attendance has averaged 86%.

The Parish Council has seen two Councillors stand down from the PC in November, Maureen Sears and Val Ryan. They were replaced with Jules Druce and Stacey Reed.

Parishioners in attendance have been as low as one on two occasions and as high as 10, an average attendance of 4 per meeting.

We have also had County Councillor Dan Levy present for five of the meetings, and District Councillors Lysette Nicholls and Charlie Maynard together attending nine.

Mike Ryan also stood down in November after 20 years' service to the village as Parish Clerk

Among matters considered:

**Planning:** There have been 20 Planning Applications.

**Gravel:** The Gravel Liaison Group has not met since 2019. At the 31 December 2023 the consent for Hanson to quarry gravel from the Stonehenge site came to an end.

**Roads:** The state of the roads is regularly reported to OCC. Potholes continue to be a problem particularly where traffic is crossing grass verges damaging the road edges.

(Scott Gillam can now mark and report potholes etc direct to WODC, but only within the Parish's 30mph speed limit area)

**Precept:** The Parish Precept this year was increased by 9.1%. making a band D property tax £27.74 p.a.

**Allotments.** There were no unused allotments in 2023. The allotments seek to cover the cost to the Parish of the rent and water rates by means of a small rental charge. The Council would have liked to see the formation of an allotment association, but this has not materialised again this year.

**Playing Field.** This continues to be the largest expenditure for monies from the Precept. There is a Playing Field Voluntary Group who are looking to raise funds to create a new Play Park. The monies required is some £100,000 and they have reached some 50% of their target.

**Public Transport.** A bus service is now being provided by First and Last Mile that takes passengers to Eynsham where there are connections to services to both Witney and Oxford.



## The Red Lion, our Community Pub

### The Red Lion

- Celebrating 10 Years of Community Ownership
- Thanks to Ian and Lisa for their Stewardship
- We wish them All the Best in their next venture

### Survey Results

- Use of Artificial Intelligence avoided bias
- Quality Classic Pub Food with Theme Nights
- Sharing dishes for smaller appetites
- Range of Ales, Lager, Cider, Wines & Spirits
- Cosy, Open Fires, and Soft Background Music
- Open more, flexibility, and easy to book

### Development Plans

- Recruiting for the 20<sup>th</sup> Tenants of The Red Lion
- Over 900 hits in the "Morning Advertiser"
- Interviews underway, local and national applicants
- Summary Survey Results are Informing Direction

### What Happens Next

- Continuing Work on Refurbishments
- Appoint the Next Tenants of the Red Lion
- Shepherds Huts – Prepare for re-opening
- New Directors and Possible Share Offering



Thank you

Registered office address

The Birches 28a High Street, Standlake, Witney,  
Oxfordshire, United Kingdom, OX29 7RY

Company number **08763109**

Email : [northmoorlion@gmail.com](mailto:northmoorlion@gmail.com)



### The Northmoor Village Hall

The Northmoor Village Hall Foundation, an Independent Charity, number 1164963



- The Village Hall**
  - Just over 25 years old
  - Much loved by the local community
  - Regular Bookings, Parties, Dancing, Exercise Classes and Community Events
  - More Exciting events planned!
  - Key part of the Village Emergency Plan
- Recent Activities**
  - New Security Lighting System
  - Higher Capacity Guttering System
  - Removal of the Diseased Ash Tree
  - Upgrade of the Broadband Capabilities
- Development Plans**
  - Looking for Volunteers to help run the hall
  - Maintaining the Fabric of the Building
  - Refurbishments of the toilet facilities
  - A new oven for the Kitchen
  - Upgrade to the Hall Automation System
- What Happens Next**
  - Levelling and Renovating the Parking Area
  - Roof and Guttering Cleaning
  - Fundraising Activities
  - Joint Ventures with Other Charities



Full fib broadband is here

2024

Northmoor Village Market

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

The Source Cirencester Oxford Chiltern Hills

The Village Hall

## Church Report

Although St Denys's church has been at the centre of the village for almost 800 years, it's fair to say that it is marginal to the lives of most people most of the time. In the 2023 Village Community Survey, out of 86 responses a quarter said they never used the church, and over half only used it annually or quarterly. Like most rural churches we have small congregations at our regular services, with a notable lack of young families. For any number of reasons, 'going to church' is no longer a regular habit.

On the other hand, it's very different when it comes to special occasions: the candle-lit carol services each fill the church at Christmas; the farmyard Nativity is also very popular, and the lambing services also attract young families. Perhaps the most obvious examples of the church's importance to the life of the village are baptisms, weddings and, above all, funerals, which for many people still set their lives in a powerful spiritual context. And the fact that the churchyard is open for burials and the interment of ashes answers a deeply felt need. Many of the graves are lovingly cared for, as a way of keeping a loved one's memory fresh in people's hearts. And the Remembrance service always fills the church.

The PCC are very conscious of the need to preserve this tradition of service to the community, and are truly grateful to all those who help to keep that tradition alive. But there's no getting away from the fact that it's a struggle to keep financially viable. Bear in mind that the church relies entirely on voluntary contributions. The Parish Share which we have to pay to the Diocese is currently more than £13,000, and the running costs of the ancient building (insurance, electricity etc) are £366 per week.

We're currently exploring various ways of raising funds, in addition to the Harvest Lunch and sales of produce, and we'd welcome any ideas or offers of help. After eight centuries we owe it to all those previous generations to be faithful guardians of our heritage.

## **Fast and Last Mile Notes:**

Many apologies for not being able to attend the Northmoor Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday 19 March 2024. This is due to a clash of dates.

In the last 12 months passenger numbers on the First and Last Mile 418 service to Eynsham has increased slowly and we have made the following improvements.

- 1) All services in Bablock Hythe now serve Ferry Lane with stops at the Ferryman and the entrance to the Residential Park.
- 2) There is now a direct service to Eynsham picking up at the Red Lion at 10.02 and the Ferryman at 10.05. This only takes 14 minutes to get to Eynsham.
- 3) A new Wednesday Shopper bus direct to Witney runs every Wednesday leaving the Ferryman at 09.30 and the Red Lion at 09.34. This bus stops at Sainsburys as well as the Market Square in Witney giving passengers just under 2 hours in the town.
- 4) Northmoor and Bablock Hythe are now served up to 7 times a day Monday to Friday.
- 5) Our buses stop anywhere that is safe to do so not just at the main stops.
- 6) Bus passes are accepted on all our services through the village.
- 7) First and Last Mile are looking for more drivers and volunteers as well as seeking to recruit a Transport Manager. This will incur increased costs. If there is anyone interested from Northmoor we would love to hear from them.

First and Last Mile would like to thank all of you who have used our service in the last 12 months and to invite those who haven't to try out the 418 and the 471.

Regards  
David Miles  
First and Last Mile



## **Play Park Notes**

### **Background of project**

Nearly 18 months ago a group of parents were using the park and they noticed that the equipment was rather wobbly when in use. We had a conversation with the Parish Council and agreed that some sort of action needed to be taken. I agreed to lead this piece of work, and this is where the Park Replacement Committee was born!

### **Progress**

A lot has happened over those 18 months.

### **ROSPA Inspection**

The first action was to commission an external, impartial safety inspection. The report from this was rather damning, lots of the equipment was condemned primarily due to ground rot, and at this point it was clear that replacement of the park was required, rather than more basic maintenance and TLC.

### **Public Consultation**

The next step was to gather the opinions of the public about what they wanted from the new park. Two surveys were circulated to Northmoor residents and neighbouring villages, 1 aimed at children and 1 aimed at adults. The results of these were used to influence the vision and plans for the new park.

### **Quotes**

Using the survey information, we reached out to 5 play equipment companies representing a cross section of the market to quote for replacement equipment. We received 3 quotes, and presented these, along with our recommendations, to the Parish Council. We considered design, play value, reputation, quality, warranty, and materials when considering the quotes, and decided to accept the midpoint quote from Proludic. The total cost will be circa £100,000. The committee are well aware that this is a huge sum of money and have not approached this lightly! The bulk of the cost covers the high quality, safety compliant play equipment. The remainder of the funds will cover restoration of the grass pre-install, a bespoke ground maze, bins, benches, fencing etc. as well as 15 years' worth of ROSPA inspections to ensure we meet our warranty requirements.

### **Accounts**

Meanwhile, behind the scenes we were linking with the Northmoor Village Trust and Parish Council to set up bank accounts, register for gift aid, set up just giving pages, and ensure we were being VAT efficient.

### **Income generation**

The current pot sits at circa £55,000. This is made up of Section 106 monies, Grant funds (including £19,000 from the National Lottery), as well as monies raised from Fundraising events, personal donations, and corporate sponsorship. We continue to generate income through grant applications, fundraising events, and by approaching companies for corporate sponsorship.

### **What's next?**

We are very aware that the fundraising efforts are reaching out to the same people, but we are keen to get the funds raised, the project finalised and installed as quickly as possible. We currently have applications in for 3 grants, all of which we should hear back from by June. At this point we will review our total pot, and will make a plan regarding how we move forwards. There is a possibility that we will take a phased approach, installing some equipment this summer, whilst generating funds to finance the remaining equipment. We are also trying to set up a village lottery which would provide a platform for continued fundraising that could be directed to multiple village causes, including ongoing park related costs. We hope to have this set up soon.