

NORTON CANES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Council Meeting held on 20th June 2012 at 7 p.m. at Norton Canes Community Centre

Present: J.Beddows J.Bernard
A.Bernard J.Bridgen
J.Preece J..Davies
P.Gilbert J.Hampshire
Mrs.L.Florence (Clerk)

Also in attendance:

Inspector Chris Ellerton – Staffordshire Police (for first part of meeting)

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

306/2012 Public Participation

Inspector Ellerton was welcomed to the meeting. An update on local policing was given to the meeting and the changes that were happening were outlined. Inspector Ellerton gave some statistics to crime within the local area referring to a decrease in crime between the dates 1st April to 6th June from year 2011 to 2012 these had reduced from 17 to 4. Similarly anti social behaviour reports had also reduced from 42 last year to 14 this year. An anti social behaviour officer is available to look at not just the perpetrators but those who are on the periphery. All calls are reviewed and feedback is provided to each call. He stated that there were additional resources to put into the area but there are no concerns about Norton Canes and the current policing structure will remain. He did refer to the implications of reduced funding which posed challenging times for Police along with other partner agencies and the huge savings that need to be made now and up until 2015 which require more flexibility in how police officers respond to incidents. It may not always be possible for Police to attend Parish Council meetings as they may be required to respond to incidents of crime in other areas.

Question was raised as to whether the PSCO's powers were being changed and whether those powers are robust enough. Inspector Ellerton gave details of the changes proposed for PSCO's. Inspector Ellerton stated that the PSCO's are a good conduit between Police/Parish Councils/Communities and would like to keep them in this specific area to build relationships in schools and have visibility in the community which they see as investment in the locality which is important.

Issue of up to date information being available in printed format and placed on the Notice Boards.

The Owl initiative was referred to which Inspector Ellerton stated was an electronic communications for Neighbourhood Watch. Vicky Singleton will be co-ordinating this and will only be available if you are a member of Neighbourhood Watch.

Off road motorbikes was raised as an ongoing issue. Inspector Ellerton stated that regular operations take place where these bikes are seized most of which occur in the Chasewater area at weekends.

Inspector Ellerton was thanked for his presentation and left the meeting.

Queens Diamond Jubilee Event - Julie Bullock wished it to be noted that the event was an excellent day and wished to record the thanks for the work of the Clerk which she felt was over and above the duties asked of the role.

Dog Fouling – following a previous enquiry relating to dog fouling contact had been made with the District and County Council. The meeting was informed that the District Council are pro-active in dealing with these issues and reported that 14 fines have been made within the last month. The District have agreed to update the notices around the village and provide further leaflets which can be located at the Parish Office.

Highways - there are still ongoing concerns about the general condition of some of the road and pathways in the village. The meeting was informed that there is regular communication between the Parish and Mark Keeling from Highways Dept and a schedule of works is agreed with him on a regular basis. Although additional resources have been identified for Staffordshire some question raised as to where this is new money is being targeted.

A request has been made that a member of the management team from Highways Dept attend the August Council meeting to address some of the issues which are raised on a regular basis. It would also be helpful if the County Councillor for the village could also attend. Cllr.J.Bernard outlined the process for attendance by County Councillors at Parish meetings and expressed the view that Cllr.John Rowley had in the past attended meetings but had not been able to contribute to the meeting. Cllr.J.Bernard stated that he felt Cllr.John Rowley would be open to having a surgery in the village where residents could attend and put forward their concerns or requests.

Action: Cllr.J.Bernard to speak to Cllr.John Rowley re surgery in Norton Canes.

Washbrook Lane – there is still an ongoing problem with fly tipping in this area which is reported on a regular basis to the District Council

Wyrley Bridge – issue of number of men/boys congregating at Wyrley Bridge opposite Big House Farm which had been a problem in the past.

Action: Clerk to inform PCSO's of the activity in this area and ask them to monitor it.

District Councillor attendance – an approach had been made to Cllr.M Holder re attendance at Parish Council meetings to which he had replied that he did not feel his attendance was compulsory but that as part of his role as Clerk to Great Wyrley Parish Council he also had to attend many meetings, some of which are not published on the web and these often occur on a Wednesday which prevents him attending this Parish Council. He has requested agendas and minutes in the past and these have not always been made available. A process has now been agreed that the agendas and minutes will be emailed to him in the future.

NCCA/Community Partnership - members of the public participation stated that they had attended NCCA and Community Partnership meetings as observers to see what items are discussed and whether there is an overlap with what is happening in the Parish. They feedback that they found the meetings to be insular and that questions raised by them at the meeting had not been answered.

Question raised as to whether the Community Partnership was still functioning and whether the office is open.

The public participation closed at 8 p.m.

306/2012 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs.A.Gilbert, Z.Stretton, R.Bishop, S.Harding, M.Hopely.

307/2012 Declarations of Interest

Cllr.J.Bernard - District and County Planning

308/2012 Minutes and Matters Arising from meeting held on 16th May 2012

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 16th May 2012 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Cllr.J.Bernard

Seconded: Cllr.J.Preece

Page 3 – Norton Canes Primary School Ofsted Report. Cllr.J.Bernard informed the meeting that he had spoken to County Councillor J.Rowley about the matter and his response was that he was aware that there had been some positive answers and feedback from parents about the Report but that he needed to get permission from the Headteacher about what information could be disclosed.

Cllr.J.Beddows stated that he had recently visited the school to take part in a presentation and was very impressed with the work of the school. There

appeared to be a genuine respect for the Headteacher and the school as a whole.

309/2012 **Police Report**

An updated report had been included in Inspector Ellerton's presentation.

310/2012 **Reports from Councillors**

Cllr A.Bernard informed the meeting that she had visited Huntingdon Youth Club to observe the Right Stuff Project and stated how impressed she was with the actual set up with a variety of children being encouraged to take part in this activity. She had spoken with PC Andy Whitehall who is leading the Project and who had explained how the Project works. It was very evident that the Project had transformed some of the children's lives and provided them with confidence and discipline. Cllr.A.Bernard stated that she fully endorsed the pilot Project coming into the village during August and that on this conclusion the Parish Council should provide the funding as discussed at the April Council meeting.

Cllr.J.Hampshire – referred to the Norton Bog Project as making real progress but more volunteers are required.

Cllr.J.Bernard – gave an update on the re-opening of the Accident and Emergency at Stafford Hospital which has now been put back to October 2012 but emphasised that things are on track and where there have been issues highlighted these are all being addressed in the right way.

311/2012 **Reports from Committees**

Audit and Governance – Cllr.J.Bernard gave feedback from the Committee meeting held on the 6th June.

- Annual Return and Accounts – a balance sheet was circulated to the meeting detailing the financial position as at the 31st March 2012 and information relating to its contents was discussed. Cllr.J.Bernard confirmed that he had signed off the balances of the Bank statements and confirmed that there were adequate controls in place in relation to the monitoring of the Precept. There was an underspend of £7,300 in year 2011-12 which Cllr.J.Bernard proposed Council consider transferring to the savings account.
- Internal Auditors Report – reference was made to the contents of the Auditors report which stated that the accounts were up to date and verified that all tax, insurance and vat had been calculated and claimed for.
- Future arrangements for Audit Commission – the changes for the external audit was outlined for 2012/13 onwards. Grant Thornton are the nominated auditors for Staffordshire and will be undertaking the Parish accounts in the future. If the Parish wish to make consultation on this they are required to do so by August 2012.

- Pension contribution for Clerk – a request had been made by the Clerk to consider supporting a pension contribution as part of her salary. Cllr.J.Bernard had looked into this and notice is required to be given for this to be an agenda item in August.
- Clerk's Meeting with Chief Executive Cannock DC – feedback on the meeting attended by the Clerk which covered the following items:
 - Future of Standards Committee
 - Code of Conduct
 - Bus Shelters
 - Localism and what this means for Parish Councils

It was resolved:

- 1. To approve the Annual Return and Accounts for 2011/12**
- 2. To approve the transfer of £7,000 to the savings account.**
- 3. To accept the new arrangements for external audit.**
- 4. To explore the pension contributions for the Parish Clerk**

Projects Committee – Cllr.A.Bernard gave an overview of the work of the Committee during the last month as follows:

Skatepark – a letter has now been received from Cannock Chase District Council offering a solution to the ownership of the land on which the skatepark is currently situated. The District Council are offering to enter into a Licence agreement with the Parish Council for the upgrade of the skatepark at a small nominal peppercorn rent of £1 per annum. Within the agreement the District would also take responsibility for the annual inspection of the skatepark and the litterpicking of the area on a weekly basis. Discussion ensued about the indemnity insurance required for the skatepark and agreement that we confirm with the insurance company about the cover required.

It was resolved:

To proceed with the District Council for a Licence for the land to enable the skatepark to be updated.

Planting of Islands – the meeting was informed that we are now in dialogue with the County Council in taking the issue forward relating to the Turf Island and this will be discussed further at the next Projects meeting.

The agreement to plant the other two islands in the village namely Blakeney Island and Brownhills Road are still being progressed. The Highways Team will be clearing the Blakeney Island to enable the Lengthsman and Cllr.J.Hampshire to plant bulbs. The issue of expenditure for the planting of the islands was discussed and as there is a surplus in the budget for hanging baskets Cllr.J.Hampshire suggested that this could be utilised for this purpose.

It was resolved:

To allocate £100 from the hanging basket budget to purchase plants for Blakeney Island and Brownhills Road.

Planning

356 Hednesford Road – front canopy and mono-pitched roof. Application was considered.

No Objection

Development of land Red Lion Lane (old dog track site) – the meeting was informed that this had been passed by the District Planning Committee but still has to be referred to the Inspector.

312/2012

Community Link

Discussions have taken place with Cllrs.Z.Stretton and J.Beddoes re the Community Link being reinstated. It is suggested that it be published twice a year and discussions are taking place about this. Need to identify where the photocopier is located that was previously used for this publication. This item to be deferred to future agenda when Cllr.Stretton is able to feedback. It was suggested that an approach be made to Janet Lee a reporter for the Chase Post who is a resident of the village as to whether she would be prepared to help with this project in any way.

Action: Clerk to contact Janet Lee.

313/2012

Development of land Brownhills Road/Burntwood Road

Cllr.A.Bernard informed the meeting that the Projects Committee had been working on the development of this land similar to the Millennium garden. A consultation process had taken place with residents and the feedback received was very positive that something should be done to create a garden area for people to access and in some way this could become a memorial garden for war veterans. Also consideration for inclusion of those who worked within the mining industry. 3 quotes have been received which the Projects Committee have discussed and wish to put forward for full Council approval the quote from N.R.Grundy at a cost of £11,320 who have experience of working with local Councils re landscaping projects and felt to be the preferred provider. Previously full Council had ringfenced £10,000 for this Project and Cllr.A.Bernard wished to propose that further consideration be given to meet the full cost of the work by providing the extra £1,320 required. Cllr.J.Bernard felt that given the current economic climate some negotiation with the company could be made and suggested that £1,000 be added to the £10,000 to enable this work to be carried out.

The proposal was put to the vote of full Council.

It was resolved:

All Councillors at the meeting were in favour of proposal for £11,000 be ringfenced for the development of the land pending negotiation with the Company.

314/2012 Chairman's Report and Correspondence

The Chairman reported on the following items:

- Date for next Norton Canes Network is Tuesday 26th June at 9.30 a.m. at Norton Canes Library if anyone wishes to attend.
- A Neighbourhood Newsletter was available for members which gave information about Whats On in Your Area.
- An invitation has been received for the Chairman to attend Burntwood Jubilee Festival on the 21st July at Burntwood Rugby Club. The Chairman cannot however attend due to other commitments and it was suggested that the Vice Chair and partner attend to represent the Parish Council. The Chairman agreed to purchase 2 tickets at a cost of £20 from his Chairman's allowance.
- A request has been received from the Community Partnership for the Parish Council to provide a letter of support for a funding application for a new roof at the Trinity Methodist Church. It was agreed that a letter should be provided.

Action: Clerk to send a letter of support for the funding application.

- Community Council for Staffordshire – a letter had been received regarding the annual subscription to this organisation which was now due. It was agreed not to renew the subscription as Parish Council did not access any services which they provided.

Action: Clerk to write and cancel subscription.

315/2012 Authorisation of Accounts

The accounts for June having previously been circulated were approved for payment.

Proposed: Cllr.J.Bernard

Seconded: Cllr.P.Gilbert

316/2012 Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 15th August 2012 at 7 p.m. at Norton Canes Community Centre (no meeting in July due to Summer recess)

SIGNED: DATED