

NORTH CRAWLEY PARISH COUNCIL



Acting Clerk: Mrs S M Bushnell, 3 Folly Lane, North Crawley, Newport Pagnell, MK16 9LN (01234 391501)

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 1 May 2018 at 6.30 pm

Present: Parish Councillors: J Small (Chair), L Fryer, L Maclennan, G Magee, J Sandall and L Maclennan
MK Ward Councillors K Maclean and D Hosking
Acting Clerk and RFO S M Bushnell
PCSO C1018 Arlene Ormston
7 members of the public

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Ward Councillor P Geary

2. **Declarations of Interests:** None

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 2 May 2017 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

4. **Matters Arising:**

It was reported that unfortunately the WI had been disbanded a few months ago. In order to try to fill this gap, a new organisation had been formed called North Crawley Ladies (NCL) and this now had several members including former WI members.

5. **Report from the Parish Council Chair:** Cllr Small read out her report as follows -

- First of all, a look back at the main issues we have dealt with over the past 12 months, most of which concern development of one sort or another:
- Ringcroft Farm: There had been a change of use of land, and a planning contravention notice was issued to which there was no response. The Enforcement Officer at MKC drafted a report to action enforcement in May, but then he left MKC and nothing further happened until a new enforcement officer was appointed and notice was served on proprietors in October to appeal or apply for planning permission within 6 months. To date activity continues on site, and we have heard no more from MKC on the matter.

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- Wharley End Development: The development of 300 houses was strongly opposed by both North Crawley and Cranfield Parish Councils; we were particularly concerned about the size of the development and its proximity to the village, and the likely increase in traffic. The proposal was declined by Central Beds Council, was appealed against, and there was a hearing at the end of March.
- Development on land at Moat Farm: In May outline planning for approximately 76 dwellings was submitted to MKC. We objected to it on the grounds that the development was contrary to MKC's policy as this was development in the open countryside, it was not appropriate, was too large, there was insufficient infrastructure, and of course was contrary to the wishes of the residents as indicated in the developing Neighbourhood Plan. MKC declined the proposal which was then appealed, and a hearing took place with an inspector representing The Secretary of State in Milton Keynes at the end of March, attended by the Chair, who spoke, and Acting Clerk. Today we heard that the appeal has been dismissed.
- Proposed 3 bedroom house on land to the rear of The Chequers: This was opposed by the Parish Council and residents on many grounds, and declined by MKC. An appeal was lodged and referred to the Development Control Panel, who at a meeting well supported by residents and Councillors, unanimously rejected the proposal.
- Development adjacent to 4 Chicheley Road: A valuable lesson was learnt when this application was approved under delegated powers by MKC. The Parish Council was not aware that the decision could have gone to a committee if 5 or more residents had objected. Cllr MacLennan subsequently met with MKC Planning Department and received an overview of the planning process; it was recommended that all Councillors attend a specifically designed course, so that they are well informed when considering future planning issues.
- Cranfield Airpark Proposal: A public exhibition held at the airpark last year was attended by some Councillors and residents from North Crawley. There were concerns over the scale of the development, issues of increased noise, and increased traffic through the village in terms of construction traffic and then with employees travelling to and from work. The proposer's consultants agreed to meet the Parish Council and gave a presentation, but they did not seem to take our concerns seriously. Outline permission has been granted by Central Beds Council, and on 5 December was endorsed for development management by their executive committee.
- Development of Plan:MK and threat of 5000 houses neat J14: Plan:MK reached the final stage of consultation and was then submitted to the planning inspector on 31 March. MKC has been awarded £76m for their housing improvement plan, which must be spent by 2021 and may be used for infrastructure works around the M1. Worryingly, there has been no talk of consultation with residents or Parish Councils.
- Neighbourhood Plan: During the last 12 months the Neighbourhood Plan has developed apace, due to the huge efforts of a group of dedicated and hardworking volunteers who give generously of their time. From public meetings to the compilation and distribution of a comprehensive questionnaire to all residents aged 16 and over, to a public exhibition of collated results; we have now reached the stage where a paid consultant can begin to draw up the document for perusal by the PC.

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- Moving on to Police Community Support:
PCSO Arlene Ormston has been working hard to build up a good relationship with residents and has raised the profile of Thames Valley Police within this and other villages, holding introductory meetings and patrolling regularly.
- Neighbourhood Watch: Arlene has tried to garner interest, but there is little support for starting the scheme, which is surprising given the rise in burglaries over the last year, perhaps nobody wants to take on the administration.
Operation Drover: This was trialed In September, Thames Valley Police being present on farms and working together with farmers on rural crime. The operation was very successful, and is now being repeated every 3-4 months.
- Smartwater Scheme: Initiated by Arlene and subsequently taken up by Cllr. Sandall, residents were invited to buy Smartwater packs, so that they could mark their possessions invisibly and indelibly, put stickers in their windows and hopefully deter burglars. Several Parish Councils banded together so that one purchase could be made to achieve a reasonable price. Unfortunately take up was not great.
- Speeding: Always of great concern in the village, there are currently two initiatives under way:
 - Community Speedwatch, which needs volunteers from village to be trained. The Parish Council would Like Thames Valley Police to attend a meeting to explain this in more detail so that it can be put to residents.
 - With the assistance of two residents, arrangements are in hand to site speed vans in Folly Lane, to try and curb the excess speed of vehicles traveling to and from the Cranfield University/Airpark.
- Finally, on to the Parish Council: In May 2017 when I took on the post of Chair, we were down to just three councillors, and I agreed to do it for one year only, hoping by then we would have recruited more people. We were sorry to lose long serving councillor John Hobbs, whose knowledge and experience proved invaluable over the years, also two other Councillors who joined us in the spring, stayed for a short while then resigned for family reasons. However, in July we were fortunate enough to welcome Liz Fryer, Lucy MacLennan and James Sandall. Together with Cllr. Magee they make a good team, and bring a fresh perspective to our meetings. Our long standing Clerk Pat Reynolds Nunn resigned at the end of December. She gave great service to the Parish Council and again her knowledge and experience are missed. Despite advertising, very few people expressed an interest in taking up the post and there were none with specific experience, so our Responsible Finance Officer Sheila Bushnell is also now our Acting Clerk.
- I would like to thank those few diehard supporters who come along to every meeting to keep an eye on what is going on, we really do appreciate it. There does however seem to be a general lack of interest in the Parish Council until something comes along that residents deem a threat to their way of life; for example, the proposed as development at Moat Farm. Even then, nobody from the village attended the appeal meeting with the inspector. Thus it was difficult to make a convincing case for the strength of feeling in the community. It may be worth considering canvassing residents and inviting them to a future meeting to explore what they understand to be the function of the Parish Council, whether they see it as relevant and what they would like it to encompass going forward.

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- In conclusion, as I stand down from the Parish Council, I would like to say that it has been a great privilege to serve as a Parish Councillor and then Chair for the past year. Thank you for your support.
6. **Parish Council Financial report for 2017/18:** A summary of the receipts and payments for the financial year 2017/18 were handed round. The accounts would be available for public inspection after they had been audited.
 7. **Report from North Crawley United Charities:** The Chair read out the following report -
 - The Charity ended the year with £11,827.37 in the current and business saver accounts held locally. £34.75 has been accrued for expenses paid at the end of the year.
 - The capital funds in the COIF account stand at £19,097.59 – up £334.81 on the 2017 closing figure. An amount of £662.51 was received from the COIF fund into the Charity bank account during the year.
 - Whilst income more or less remained the same as in the previous year, the expenditure was lower due mainly to the fact that only one apprentice grant had been awarded.
 - 9 allotments at Town Lands were rented by 5 allotment holders bringing in an income of £404. This is slightly down on the previous year as one allotment holder decided not to continue renting her plots. The figure includes Mr O’Haren’s rent for Town Lands and the rent paid by the Parish Council for Broadmead.
 - The Christmas distribution of 2016 saw £200 being awarded to 5 households. The same was awarded at Christmas 2017.
 - During the year a one-off payment of £50 had been made to a villager who had gone through a distressing experience. The person concerned was extremely grateful and sent a note on receiving the payment to say he had experienced “the worst and best of human nature” in the space of a few days.
 - A notice is put in SCAN at least once a year to encourage grant applications. Despite this, only one application had been received and a grant awarded. The recipient was extremely grateful to the trustees for the support.
 - The Charity is in the process of registering Town Lands and Broadmead with the Land Registry.
 - There is a full complement of Trustees all of whom served throughout the year. The 4-year term for three trustees, Malcolm Rose, John Plummer and Chris Stapleton, expired in December 2017 and they were duly re-appointed by the Parish Council. The statutory 4-year period of service for the remaining Trustees, Julia Chinn, Bridget Cookham, Graham Cookham and Jo Small, expires in May 2018. They are all happy to continue and it is requested that the Parish Council gives approval to re-appoint all four Trustees. Jo Small is willing to continue to represent the Parish Council as a Trustee if this is acceptable.
 - The Trustees meet 3 times a year in April, June and November. The dates of the meetings for the following year are booked at the November meeting.
 8. **North Crawley Neighbourhood Plan Report:** Cllr Magee reported that work on the Neighbourhood Plan has started in June 2016 with a steering group that had been set up

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by the Parish Council. A grant of £7,550 had been received to support the work of the steering group and in particular with the costs of appointing a consultant. Some of the expenses had also been met by the Parish Council. A questionnaire had taken place and all responses had been recorded and analysed and two public meetings had been held. The draft plan would be submitted to Parish Councillors in the next few days and it would be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting. When it had been adopted by the Parish Council, arrangements would be made in due course for a referendum to be held where residents would be able to accept or reject the plan. Thanks were expressed for the work which had been undertaken but Cllr Magee explained that there were ten members of the steering group who all deserved thanks for the amazing time and effort they had put in so far.

9. **Ward Councillors' Report:** They were pleased to see the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. There were many being currently being progressed in the villages which was excellent news. When approved, Neighbourhood Plans became part of planning policy for the area and they had seen planning applications turned down as a result of them. They thought that the North Crawley plan would probably be in place before there were any major residential planning applications. They were pleased that the Moat Farm development appeal had been turned down and this, along with the unsuccessful appeal for the Chequers Lane application, showed the value of community action. As far as the Ringcroft Farm development was concerned, it was suggested that the Clerk could write to MKC for an update. As far as highways and potholes were concerned, they suggested that if they were kept informed, they would try to get work carried out more speedily. Approval had not yet been given for the housing infrastructure that was planned but it had now progressed to phase 2. They understood that a more detailed bid was now being put together and that there should be some consultation with North Crawley, Chicheley and Moulsoe as they would be affected by it. The decision was several months away. The villages must let them know their views if they wished to make objections.
10. **Report from North Crawley C of E School:** Unfortunately, a representative was not present at the meeting and a report had not been submitted which could be read out.
11. **North Crawley IMC Report:** Sam Potts, the Chair of the IMC gave a verbal report. He gave thanks to the Parish Council for their continued financial support. Financially the IMC was in a much better position than it had been a few years ago. At the AGM, all the trustees were re-appointed and some new ones were appointed. The hall hire costs for 2017/18 had been frozen and this had been a unanimous decision of the committee. The Institute was a great facility but it was not well advertised and this was being looked into. The ownership of the land on the Pound Lane side of the playing field remained unknown and this was being investigated. It was important to establish the owner as they needed to keep the ditch clear. The IMC was very concerned about dog fouling which was getting worse. Some new signs had been put up but a different line was now being considered. It was possible that there would be consultation on whether to ban all dogs from the field.

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12. **Questions from members of the public:**

Dog Fouling: Following on from the IMC report, there was much discussion on this topic. The Parish Council supported measures to eradicate dog fouling but it was felt that there should be a middle ground rather than an outright ban – possibly only allowing dogs on leads on the field. Naming and shaming was thought to be effective if people were willing to do that. It was noted that there was no dog warden in MK now. Education was important and the threat of a total ban might have an effect. Notes were often put in Scan about this but it was thought that some of the offenders may not actually live in the area covered by Scan.

IMC hall hire rates: There was a feeling that those who lived in North Crawley should have a discounted rate if they wished to hire the hall. It was often too expensive for local groups, etc. Would a local rate be possible? Mr Potts explained that bills had to be paid and that giving a reduced rate to residents of North Crawley would have to result in higher rates for others. Research had shown that North Crawley hire rates were more or less in line with others in the local area. There was also the situation where a resident booked the Institute for an outside event and so it was sometimes difficult to determine a local event.

A resident asked whether there were “deals “in place for some local organisations which did not apply to everyone. Mr Potts explained that there were no deals other than the arrangement with the Cricket Club and this was because the Cricket Club mainly only used the field and the Club Room which they maintained themselves. All the deals that previously existed had now gone. It was mentioned that the Historical Society members were 99% from North Crawley and would appreciate a reduced rate. Mr Potts said the IMC would be willing to consider a proposal from the Society but reiterated the fact that a reduced rate to one organisation would result in an increase for another.

All were thanked for their attendance and support.

The meeting closed at approximately 7.30 pm when light refreshments were served before the First Parish Council meeting.

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