

Stowe Nine Churches Parish Council

Chairman: Mrs S Henley

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Stowe Nine Churches held at the Old School Rooms, Church Stowe on **Tuesday 21st May 2019** at 8pm.

Present: Parish Cllrs Henley, Lane, Brodie, Taylor and Teague
Cllr R Brown (NCC) Cllr J Amos (DDC) and three residents

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Parish Councillors T Sanderson and J Hillyard

2. County Councillor's report – Cllr Robin Brown

Councillor Brown had provided a report in advance of the meeting (attached) and spoke about the demise of Northamptonshire County Council and the Minister's announcement regarding the 'Vesting Day' for the new Councils of April 2021

3. District Councillor's report – Cllr Johnnie Amos

Councillor Amos had provided a report in advance of the meeting (attached) and spoke about the Weedon by pass and the agreement for the repairs to Hellidon bridge in Charwelton, which were due to commence shortly.

4. Northampton Police report

No officer in attendance to provide a report.

5. Parish Council report – Chairman Cllr Sharon Henley

The Chairman of the Parish Council thanked residents for their support in the preparation of the Village Design Statement, which would shortly be submitted to Daventry District Council. She also thanked her fellow Councillors for their support during a difficult year where the Council had three different people filling the Clerk's role.

6. Presentation on the M1 J13-16 Smart Motorway scheme

Community Relations Manager – Syed Shah

Mr Shah reported on progress on the section between Junctions 13 and 15, which were proceeding as planned. He also discussed with residents and Councillors the benefits of 'All Lane Running' and that, in the case of an accident or incident the official advice is to stay in your car and call 999.

7. Open Forum for Residents

There were no questions from residents

Cllr Robin Brown

Woodford & Weedon Division – Northamptonshire County Council

ANNUAL REPORT April 2018 to March 2019

My report to you and your community is somewhat different to the previous years. I no longer act as a member of the executive of the elected administration, I am now a Back Bench councillor attending Full Council meetings (normally 6 per year) plus Overview & Scrutiny meetings, although not allowed to sit on the committees (by diktat of the Commissioners) I still see it as a key role to attend as an observer as often as practical.

The year has seen the appointment of Commissioners (following the Inspectors Report March 2018) initially to oversee Governance and Finance; but in November also the appointment of a commissioner for Children's Services. Also in March there was the appointment of a new Leader and Cabinet, (Leader Cllr Matt Golby previously a Cabinet member for Children's Services) Further there were appointments of a new Chief Executive and other senior directors, most of whom have been in place since September.2018

The Auditors stopped the use of Capital Assets & Section 106 monies earmarked to balance the previous year's budget and in consequence a deficit of £35+ million was carried forward to this year. The administration then made changes to the budget under the new Chief Executive and one of the outcomes of this was that the contentious library closures were put on hold. It is interesting to note that the Lead Commissioner is on record as saying the County Council had enough funds to deliver its statutory services and did not need a "bailout from Government". However in November, Central Government allowed the administration to use up to £70 million from Capital assets to balance last year's budget and create a £20 million general reserve thus ensuring such areas as Winter Gritting were reinstated where deemed necessary.

One final comment on the Budget for 2019/20 is the Council Tax increase of 4.99%, with the Secretary of State having allowed for an extra 2%. This was passed by the Council on the 21st February. The administration stating that the final budget would therefore balance and leave the NCC in a better financial situation.

The most significant change however is the move to Unitary Government as signalled in the Inspectors report and since has been followed through by the County's District and Borough Councils (Exception Corby BC) with the Secretary of State allowing the elections for the D&B's to be delayed until 2020.

The legal process published by the County Council and passed at an emergency meeting on the 28th February 2019, does however question (and as yet unanswered) steep rise in costs of the changeover from £15 million to £44 million: In my view, this is unlikely to stop the move to reorganising local government in the County. Elections for the two new unitary councils are planned to take place in May 2020. I have no input to the discussions and only know what is in the public domain.

During the last seven months I have spent more time with the Parishes of Everdon and Woodford Halse as both have a NCC service that has been under threat of closure. In Everdon the Outdoor Learning Centre (a non-statutory service) is under offer to be sold as a going concern to the Parish Council (Local consultation and agreed Parish Council Finance still to be completed). I look forward to this being successful and the community becoming very involved in this nationally recognised outdoor learning centre.

Woodford Halse has a small library which is now being taken over by the Parish Council. The community benefit is immense and I congratulate all involved in being determined to save that facility.

I have expressed my concern to the Cabinet Member for Highways (Cllr Ian Morris a colleague from the previous cabinet) regarding the HS2 disruption likely on the A361 and it is pleasing to note that Byfield Parish Council are now represented on the committee responsible to deal with the HS2 issues locally.

I will continue to represent you through until the next elections and hope to keep you up to date with any further developments.

Cllr Robin Brown

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March 2019

District Councillors Annual Report April 2019

It is 45 years since Daventry District Council was established, we are now about to start what is expected to be its last year before being abolished to make way for a new Unitary authority that will encompass Daventry District, South Northamptonshire, and Northampton Borough. Later in this annual report we touch on the Unitary plans in more detail.

We will continue to represent all constituents of Weedon Ward as we go through the preparations for the new authority, we expect local elections for the new unitary authority to take place in May 2020. Further updates will follow in the coming months.

1) New Daventry Development Link Road.

It is just over four and a half months since the New Link Road was opened and from day one, the Link road has proven to be a success. On the evening of the Open Day, the Motorway (North bound) was closed for hours due to an accident. The Link road took the traffic, leaving Flore and Weedon free of the usual 'gridlock' that was experience over the many previous decades.

An observation that may be of interest.....three months ago Cllr Amos was walking through the village of Flore to the Post box in, at around 10.30pm over three consecutive nights and he was taken aback by how silent the village was. Usually you could hear the hum of motorway traffic in the distance, but not so much now. This the coordinator of the Link-road said that this may be due to the section of the new Link Road, that is 'cut in', thereby absorbing some noise from the M1.

Many people have said how impressed they are by its construction, but also by the quality of the build and the way it winds through the countryside. It is hard to believe the proximity of the new Link road to the villages of Flore, Upper Heyford and Weedon. The Link road is a great time saver too. Traffic calming measures are now being looked at by Flore and Weedon.

2) Recycling of Compost

The new contract for waste management began last Summer - a joint strategy with Norse and Daventry District Council. In the lead up to the change-over, much speculation was given on the amount of extra fly-tipping that could occur owing to the cost imposed on Residents by charging for compost bin facility. Such concerns have proven to be unfounded and overall the uptake on the service was higher than

anticipated. This turned out to be beneficial for Charities, as the Weedon Ward District Councillors fought a campaign and won to get Charities exempt of being charged and were reimbursed later. Just to remind Parishes, that those who use the compost service, will need to renew their contract with Norse/DDC for 2019/2020. £36 for the year. Go to www.daventrydc.gov/gardenwaste

3) Cinema Complex, Mulberry Place, Daventry

Proposals are well under way for the cinema complex, restaurants and cafes. Work is hoping to start in July, after all the planning and other preliminary works have been finalised. The development is expected to comprise a 3/4 screen cinema with 2 restaurants fronting onto/facing a square for outdoor events. Adjacent car parks provide approximately 300 free car parking space. There are no plans to introduce a parking charge.

4) Proposed New West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority

Potentially this coming year will be the last for Daventry District Council. Essentially Central Government has determined that Northamptonshire should put forward proposals to form two new unitary authorities: one comprising of Northampton Borough, Daventry District and South Northants, to be known as "West Northamptonshire"; and another covering Wellingborough Borough, Corby Borough and East Northants, to be known as "North Northamptonshire". At the end of August 2018 councils in Northamptonshire voted in favour of a move to unitary authorities. Of the 8 councils (7 districts + NCC) only Corby voted against the joint bid to split the county into "North Northamptonshire" and "West Northamptonshire".

Generally unitary authorities are thought to be a better way to run local government than the two tier system we have at present. Unitary councils remove the confusion about who does what, allow coherent strategic thinking within a single authority rather than having to align two or more bodies, and provide an opportunity to reduce expenditure on councillors and multiple chief executives. Nonetheless, they are not magic bullets and it must be recognised that particularly in the "West" region we have been well served by two very efficient councils in South Northamptonshire and Daventry District.

We now await confirmation from the Secretary of State that he will be placing the order for the new authorities to be formed from May 2020. At this stage we simply do not know whether Brexit will delay this very important decision.

It has been a pleasure to serve you and look forward to doing so over the next year.

Cllr Johnnie Amos

Cllr Adam Brown

Cllr David Smith