

The Minutes of AYNHO ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING held on Monday 18th April 2011 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Councillor Colin Macklin (Chairman)

Councillors: Anderson, Brook, James, Oakey and Parkes.
County Councillor Ron Sawbridge
District Councillor John Townsend

In attendance: Amby Hitchcox (RFO), and Sadie Patamia (Clerk).
At least 25 members of the public were present.

1. Apologies

There were apologies from Reverend Gill Barker and Cllr Keith McClellan

2. Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 21st April 2010

It was proposed by Ted Sutton, seconded by Gill Phillips and agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2009 be approved and signed as a true record.

3. County Council Report

Councillor Ron Sawbridge stated that his report could be read in the Annual Village Report.

In addition to this he stated that that he had seen a lot of coverage in the media referring to the level of County Council reserves. Northamptonshire County Council has approximately £12 million against a budget of £1 billion which is not a great deal. He stated that the previous CEO was on a salary of £195 thousand per annum and that she had since moved to Kent which was twice the size but was on the same salary. The new CEO will be on a salary of £165 thousand which is not the great when you consider that NCC is basically a £1 billion business. He also stated that it was worth noting that NCC only pay out 40p per mile for travel.

Cllr Sawbridge stated that the fixed safety cameras in the county would be switched off this year but the mobile speed vans would still be used.

He also stated that the empowering councillor's scheme had been cut from £10 thousand to £7 thousand per Councillor per annum

Cllr Sawbridge reported that he was currently vice chair of NCC but all being well he would become chair after the forthcoming elections. He was congratulated on this.

At this point Cllr Sawbridge left the meeting

4. Matters arising from previous meeting

There were no matters arising.

5. District Council

Councillor John Townsend stated that the major issue facing the District Council was that of joint working with Cherwell. He stated that he felt sure Sue Smith would do a good job but that he did have concerns especially as Banbury falls under the new joint group. Cllr Townsend said that the merger was entirely for monetary reasons and that it represented a saving of £1.2 million.

Cllr Townsend said that there were several pressing issues within the district. These include HS2, the business case of which he felt was not proven, three wind farm applications and a biomass one. In addition to this Cherwell have an application for a solar farm.

The location of the wind farms was questioned. These are proposed between Helmdon and Greatworth, close to Paulsbury and at Upper Boddington. It was commented on that the one at Fritwell will be much closer to Aynho. With regards to this the Chair commented on the fact he felt that Cherwell often left SNC out of planning decisions even when the applications were very close to the border. He hoped that the joint working will reduce this issue. Cllr Townsend stated that SNC have a strong policy to ensure that wind farms are concealed and fit into the landscape. The visual impact of wind farms was commented on.

It was stated that it was hoped that the testing of the robustness of the HS2 business case is not a token effort. Cllr Townsend stated that this was absolutely not the case. Some people felt that it was unfortunate but that there is a case for HS2 as the railways are severely overcrowded and more and more people wish to use them. Cllr Townsend responded that there is certainly a case for modernising the transport network but was HS2 the correct way?

6. Parish Council Report including financial report

The Chair stated that there had been a great deal of change within the Council and that more was to come. He explained that several hard working, long serving members of the Council had resigned and left this year and thanked them for their huge effort. He also thanked the Clerk and RFO for their continued support and hard work.

The RFO delivered the financial report. She stated that at 31st March 2011 the Council had £14,304.53 in its bank accounts, and assets to the value of £129,324. The 2011-2012 precept is £18558.54 towards an expenditure budget of £26,172.03. APC have operated largely on budget this year and this will be reflected in the audit which was coming up. The RFO reminded everyone that they were welcome to look at the figures and to make an appointment with her if they wished to do so.

The Chair stated that since the Rightracks scheme had been completed APC had listened to comments and had NCC back several times. A road safety audit has taken place and as a result the white lines and dragons teeth have been put in.

Due to CC cuts the community speedwatch programme would stop but APC have requested that the mobile speed van visit more often. Figures show a 10% decrease in speeding through the village but the cuts to the community speedwatch programme are a concern. It was enquired as to if anyone had ever been summonsed for speeding in the village. The Chair stated that they had. People felt that the mobile speed van was too obvious and that a more subtle vehicle would be better. It was stated that the regulations on this had changed but Northants had elected to continue with the van

they have. It was commented on that the van is also always in the same place. The Chair confirmed that APC would write and ask if it could go to different spots around the village.

It was felt that the traffic island near College Fields was both dangerous for cyclists and people, especially lorry drivers still drove badly near it due to the perceived lack of space. The Chair stated that the safety scheme had proved that there was enough room even for very large trucks to get through providing they were driving appropriately. He stated that APC would contact NCC about this but that they were likely to respond that there were no funds to do anything further.

Rupert Clarke thanked the Chair for all the work he did on the Rightracks scheme.

Cllr Brook stated that the Council were setting up a parking committee to look at various areas within the village. He encouraged people to join the committee and let APC know their ideas and issues. It was commented that this sort of work had been half promised before but that nothing had ever happened.

It was stated that there should be a stop sign at the bottom of Blacksmiths Hill as the right of way was not clear here.

The Chair stated thanked Kay Anderson for all her hard work for ASRA.

The Clerk stated that after May APC would be looking at ideas on how to better communicate with the village. Some people felt that they would like more items electronically but some people prefer a hard copy. It was agreed that a mixture of both was probably the way forward. The Clerk stated that one of the things that APC would be looking at is the newsletter. It was stated that the newsletter is currently a church newsletter.

Cllr Brook briefly explained the planning process and stated that the DC does not have to listen to the PCs recommendations. Cllr Townsend stated that the DC do consider all views and that one of the first things they look at is the PC's comments and that he was always happy to come to PC meetings if there was a complex planning issue to discuss. Cllr Anderson stated he felt more feedback was needed on how the DC makes their decisions.

8. Aynho – Village of the Year 2012? How can we make it happen?

The Chair stated that as far as the Village of the Year competition went Aynho already had a good deal going for it and asked if people thought it was worth entering. It was queried as to whether there was any monetary gain in winning but this was not known. It was felt that although Aynho is a good place to live there are various issues of tidiness. The following areas and issues were raised –

Bowmens Lea

Trailer with unsightly plastic cover, there for nearly two months
8ft high hedge – gardens there are supposed to be open plan

Butts Close

Builders rubbish been there for 2 years

Charlton Road

Overhanging vegetation nad weeds

Blacksmiths Hill

Seat overgrown with ivy

Between The Square and School End
Road covered in nettles and weeds

The Glebe
Approach to garages overgrown with ivy and old fencing in ground
Overgrown front garden

Portway
Rubbish growing by road signs

Black Path
Weeds need spraying

The Chair confirmed that APC would look into all of these issues.

The lack of facilities in the village was queried as a possible stumbling block but it was felt that this was not an issue.

It was agreed that a working party ought to be set up to look at the feasibility of entering next year.

The Chair stated that one of the major issues facing the village currently was that of HS2. The current preferred route for the line is called Option 3 and would run to the east of Brackley. Residents in the affected area that will be impacted by Option 3 are fighting vigorously to have the line relocated. As two of the other identified route options would bring the line into the vicinity of Aynho, the Parish Council has continued to monitor the situation closely. The Chair assured everyone that APC will report back if anything pertinent to this happens.

Kay Anderson reported on the sportsfield and CAFÉ club. She stated that Roger Bradford and Robin Cox had worked tirelessly in building the amenity track and boules pitch. The CAFÉ club have planted various flowers etc. at sites around the village. She commented that the CAFÉ club want to do more volunteering and organising of events within the village but that she needed to hear what people wanted. Various coffee mornings and small clubs had been formed but all ideas were welcome to help create a better environment within the village.

Cllr Parkes stated that he felt the children's playground needed to be improved.

Gill Phillips reported that a biodiversity group had been set up within the village. She explained that many species were dying out and that if everyone could put aside a little space in their garden and consider it a nature reserve it would help wildlife which will improve the village.

Amby Hitchcox reported that there would be a children's photography competition running throughout the summer through the biodiversity group.

Rupert Clarke stated that on 25th September the Aynho Big Plant would be taking place. During this time volunteers would be planting up the bank of earth on the sportsfield in a wildlife friendly manner. He asked for any volunteers that could help with the design.

The Chair took this opportunity to thank Gill Phillips for all her work as the footpath warden.

8. Resolutions from Village

The Chair stated that there were not enough members of the village present to make any binding resolutions but was interested to hear from any representatives from village groups present.

Representatives of the Church stated that the fete would be taking place on the Sportsfield this year and that there would also be a flower festival in June.

The History Society reminded everyone that they were open to all and that the discussions were very Aynho orientated.

Rupert Clarke expressed thanks to the Parish Council for all their work. The Chair echoed this sentiment to his colleagues.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

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