

KINGS CLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Public meeting of the Parish Council was held on Thursday 14th April 2011 at 7.30pm. at King's Cliffe Memorial Hall

010/196 Welcome

Chairman Andrew Howard welcomed two members of the public and councillors to the meeting.

010/197 Present : Chairman A. Howard, Councillors L. Crane, J. Dixon, B. Wyles, B. Howard, Mrs. S. Trow Smith and R. Meadows.

010/198 Apologies for Absence : Councillors M. Wharton, C. Williams, G. Kingston, and M. Day

010/199 Minutes of the Public Meeting held on 8th April 2010 : Approved

Proposed : Councillor L. Crane

Seconded : Councillor B. Wyles

010/200 Any Matters Arising : The Chairman stated that any issues would be included in the various reports

010/201 Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman reported that it had been a very busy year for the community, especially during the last three months.

The Sports Complex, of which we are the landlords, has forged ahead due to the efforts of David Hellard and Andrew Pick, despite some time consuming issues for the Parish Council with the lease, over the funding of the Community Building. It was proposed to restrict the use of the grounds to the public which were not acceptable. Eventually after many delays, to obtain the necessary grants, we eventually agreed to five days and nights per week, although it is still felt this clause was unnecessary. A constructive meeting with Kings Cliffe Active was attended recently.

KC1 site : There was a significant amount inappropriate alarm raised about the permission for 145 houses to the rear of Wood Road. Petitions were gathered and objections raised at a Planning meeting at ENC. There had been Public meetings in 2005 and 2006, the Council had various meetings with the planners and developers; consequently planning permission was granted in 2007, so this year was far too late for further objections. There will be considerable benefits to the community from this development; a much need Play Area for the younger children, adjacent to the Social Club, which will benefit all parties. Traffic calming measures will be introduced in Wood Road; land for a Casual Recreational use behind the site will be given to the Parish and there are more benefits in the pipeline. We must make the most of what is being offered.

The Landfill site issues have proved challenging. Both the District and County Council refused the plans to use the site for Low Level Nuclear Waste on appeal. This went to a Public Enquiry, subsequently a Parish Poll/referendum was called here and in neighbouring villages. In Kings Cliffe, 98% of the participating electorate voted for the Council to object to Secretary of State, Eric Pickles MP. All other participating villages had similar results. It is hoped that given this and the recent tragic events in Japan will influence Mr. Pickles in our favour.

The Cemetery extension still needs more work before it can be put to use; a multi-faith blessing will be held, taking the place of the consecration ceremony formerly used. The Council received a most welcome bequest of £10,000 from the estate of Mrs. J. Bevin for the maintenance of family plots.

Highways :New signs have been placed at Station Road/Park Street, after a long wait for these. We have requested distance speeding signs, but no decision has yet been made.

The Old Fire Station has been refurbished, and the door will be painted in the near future.

It is disappointing that so few members of the public are attending this annual public meeting; also the lack of councillors, the meeting is only just quorate. The first election of Parish Councillors for twenty years will be held on Thursday 5th May. This also includes the District Councillor election

and the AV referendum. The election count will be held at Rushden; results for District Councillors are expected to be around 4pm. on Friday 6th May, this will be followed by the result of the Alternative Vote referendum, and lastly, Parish Councillors. It should be posted on the ENC web-site immediately the results are known.

Finally, thank you to all Parish Councillors for their hard work over many years, both those who are standing for re-election and those who are not. Councillor J. Dixon sent her forms to ENC, but these were apparently lost in the post. However, she will still be the official Tree Warden for the Parish.

10/202 County Councillor Heather Smith : Annual Report

Budget for Northamptonshire County Council : The Council has had to face up to a budget reduction of £73 million during the current financial year. The majority of our funding comes from central government with the council tax adding a smaller percentage to the revenue we need to run our services. Continuing record levels of children in care and an increase in the elderly population (people are living longer) has placed huge financial pressure on the authority. We have also been asked by government to freeze the Council Tax and inflation is running at around 4% so inevitably serious cuts have had to be made to discretionary services. Some of these cuts will become apparent during the summer.

Subsidised Bus Services : The budget for this subsidy has been cut from £3.1million to £1million. In this area the Call Connect service covering the North Eastern villages that I represent has been retained to Peterborough and Stamford. The remaining villages within my area should benefit from an extension to Call Connect taking them into Oundle or Corby and it is planned to have this in place by September.

Concessionary Bus passes/bus tokens : From 1st April 2011 responsibility for operating this national scheme has transferred from East Northants Council to NCC. The funding for this from central government was also cut. This means that we can only operate the statutory scheme and the discretionary elements have had to be withdrawn. The bus token scheme operated by East Northants will no longer be available so anyone who had opted for tokens in place of a bus pass will now need to get a pass. The token scheme had also been widely abused with people selling their tokens to taxi companies who bought them at 75% of their value or tokens had been passed on to someone who was not eligible for free travel. Passes are now only valid for travel after 9.30 and passes are no longer available for carers escorting someone eligible for a pass.

Winter Service : We have continued to grit one exit route from most villages when the conditions are severe and the number of grit bins supplied and filled by NCC are at their maximum level. We have around 2000 bins throughout the County and it takes 3 – 4 weeks to fill them all so now we only add one if another is removed. Parishes can purchase their own additional bins but will then be responsible for purchasing the salt and filling them. We have continued to have problems with the public using the salt for their own drives and this is theft. The salt is there for the roads and public paths only. The budget for winter 2011/12 has not been cut.

Highway Maintenance : The budget cut here will impact on the frequency of grass verge cutting and sign cleaning. We have tried to protect the budget for road repairs as investment in our roads remains a priority. During 2010 we changed the way of working for pothole repairs and if the hole needs repair but is not causing a serious risk we now take longer to carry out the repair but do it properly. The number of reported potholes has reduced in spite of the serious weather towards the end of 2010 and insurance claims are down significantly so doing a better repair is paying dividends.

Street Lighting : Most parishes in my area either have no lights or the responsibility for lighting in the village is with the Parish council. The areas in the County where NCC is responsible for lighting will see a huge reduction in lighting. We have to save £2million on our street lighting energy bill so extensive areas will not be lit. This is areas where the speed is over 40mph so is not in residential areas. In residential areas there will be a 50% cut in lighting.

Speed cameras : NCC was in partnership with the Police for road safety. The partnership has now ceased but NCC will continue with many of the education programmes. Accident investigation will continue by NCC. Speed enforcement is a Police function and they had taken the decision to switch off the fixed cameras as they do not have sufficient budget to keep them going. They will continue to use hand held speed guns and the mobile vans.

Hazardous waste site : The application by Augean the site operator to take low level radioactive waste (LLW) into their Kings Cliffe hazardous waste site was refused by NCC and a public inquiry was held in the autumn as Augean had appealed against the decision. The outcome of this appeal is still awaited and Augean has stated its intention to apply for an extension of time to 2026 and extension of site area for both hazardous waste and LLW. A public campaign to present the results of a referendum to the Secretary of State Eric Pickles has taken place. The site operator intends to carry out public consultation on the new application during this summer.

Parish Precepts : Parish Councils are not under the same pressure to keep their precepts at zero increase so if villages want to achieve more in their community there is an opportunity to compensate for some of the budget challenges causing reductions in services. This could include cutting verges or rights of way and sign cleaning. If you are interested in taking over some of the maintenance please contact me and I will help with getting all the advice you need.

Councillor Smith feels the rules should be relaxed on this last subject. It will avoid increases in Council Tax, and will allow Parishes to decide what they want doing regarding grass-cutting and the like.

The Chairman said it should not be too difficult to recruit willing persons to clean road signs occasionally. He also felt that although many parishioners do cut the grass outside their houses and clear pavement weeds, more could be done in this direction to keep the village looking smart and tidy. This will be raised at future meetings. Councillor Smith promised to let us have the NCC guidance on grass cutting issues.

Councillor B. Howard again raised the point of uneven pavements. The Chairman said compared to other local villages we have been very lucky with road and pavement repairs and in the present economic climate cannot expect any further work at present. Obviously any really dangerous areas will be reported.

Mrs. Trow Smith asked if there were to be any library closures. Councillor Smith said that due to community involvement, it was unlikely any would be closed, but it is proposed the mobile library service will be reduced.

Councillor B. Wyles raised the issue of the traffic islands at the Kings Cliffe Road/A47 junction, which are yet again damaged. It was agreed that these island are actually a lethal hazard, not a help. The PC will again complain to Highways in regard to these. Councillor Smith will also raise this issue at NCC.

On the Kings Cliffe road, the Bomb Dump corner : what is to happen there? Road widening and a turning area into the dump was proposed some time ago, but nothing more has happened; trees were felled and verge cleared but it is now becoming overgrown again. Again, Councillor Smith will investigate this matter.

10/203 District Councillor Roger Glithero : Annual Report (given later in the meeting)

Councillor R. Glithero reported that there will be no Council Tax increase, although as with all Council, ENC has suffered Government support cuts. However, there will be very few front line cuts; they are working in conjunction with Wellingborough, Rutland and Corby. One CEO will be leaving this month. None of the above should affect the general public.

In respect of the Augean proposals, Councillor Glithero was actively involved in the refusal of these plans.

In the last year, he has been heavily involved in the KCACSP Sports project and feels excellent progress has been made; it is a great facility and it must not be forgotten that ENC have contributed £500,000 towards this.

KC1 site : There has been much controversy regarding this development, but it must be remembered this permission was passed years ago. If ENC had re-opened this and refused the development, it would have again been referred to the Government with the very real risk that the number of houses may have been increased. As things stand, it is very unlikely that this estate will be completed in under five years, as the housing market is virtually stagnant.

Councillor B. Howard asked is monetary benefits will be used at the discretion of the PC? Councillor Glithero said, provided he is re-elected to the District, he would like to press for the surgery to be re-located to allow for modernisation and to avoid the dreadful congestion problems in West Street.

He thanked everyone on the PC for supporting him.

10/204 Open Forum

The Chairman said most questions had been answered earlier in the meeting; one query was regarding the management of the Sports Project. This is not managed by the PC, but by a separate registered company and we did not have the information, although it was agreed that the point being made about publication of their financial information was a very valid point

The Chairman thanked the two members of the public who had attended and invited them to stay for the remainder of the meeting. This offer was politely declined.

MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The Chairman opened the monthly meeting:-

10/205 Declarations of Interest : None

10/206 Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th March 2011 : Approved

Proposed : Councillor L. Crane

Seconded : Councillor J. Dixon

10/207 Matters arising

The matter of dangerous gravestones will be followed up by the Burial Board.

10/208 Clerks report

A Parishioner reported rubbish left at the Bottle Banks; amongst this he noticed a bag full of discarded personal papers, including a used cheque book stub. The offender was contacted and apologised, but this should be a salutary lesson to every NOT to discard anything containing personal details; and not to use the Bottle Banks area for dumping rubbish.

A Pest Control company from Easton-on-the-Hill have inspected the cemetery and regret they cannot use the gassing method there, for the same reasons all firms have given – it is a public space. They said they feel the only way is to completely rabbit fence the whole area, but rabbits have already burrowed under the extension fences.

The broken manhole cover in Wood Road has been repaired with a minimum disruption to traffic.

Several faulty lights and blocked drains have been reported and dealt with by E-on and NCC.

Many lists from ENC regarding the coming election have been received. On the advice of the Electoral Officer, these are available on the web-site. All essential posters will be displayed in the notice boards

The new waste collection service will use wheelie bins. A letter was received from ENC asking us to identify houses in the village which might have problems. Looking at their on-line map on Waste Services, the whole of West Street is marked as questionable, so they are aware that there are quite a lot of houses there with no back entrance. I have also reported this may be a problem to them.

We can now officially access Ordnance Survey maps without charge, with a password and licence number to use this facility.

10/209 Accounts payable

Curators Salary (current month)	£ 320.00
Clerks Salary (current month)	£ 160.00
ENC : Cemetery rates	£ 86.90
E-on : Lighting repairs	£ 28.16
E-on : Lighting charges Jan to March 2011	£ 616.49
Kings Cliffe Memorial Hall : Room hire charges	£ 220.00
A-on : Local Council Insurance renewal	£ 510.07
NCALC : Annual subscription	£ 230.69
Parish Gazette : annual subscription	£ 75.00
D.J. Howard Dixon : contra payment for Pitchell	£ 20.00

Proposed : Councillor B. Howard Seconded : Councillor B. Wyles

The Chairman said the Clerks Salary should be discussed at the next meeting, as her salary is now subject to PAYE tax.

10/210 Planning Applications

31 West Street : Conversion of outbuildings to residential units : EN/11/00296/LBC& EN/11/00295/FULL : discussed in tandem

No objection but the following comment was added to the application:-

We have no objections to the above proposals, but wish to add a comment that we would object to any vehicular access being given to these properties from Church Walk.

Granted by ENC : Noted

31 West Street : Pollarding & removal of lime trees : EN/11/00333/TCA

10/211 Parish Poll : 7th April 2011 : Result and action to be taken

The results of the Parish Poll, both in Kings Cliffe and all the villages participating was a resounding 'yes' to the following question:-

"Do you wish the Parish Council to take the strongest action to object to the disposal of low level radioactive waste at the East Northants Resource Management Facility or any other site in the surrounding area?"

Therefore a letters will be sent directly Eric Pickles MP and for his consideration in giving a decision on the Augean Appeal. We can only hope the right decision is taken. A copy will also be sent to our MP, Louise Bagshaw. The Parish Council feel they had already done everything within their power to object to the dumping of LL Nuclear Waste.

10/212 Local Liaison meeting report : Councillor M. Day

Councillor Day and the Clerk attended a Liaison meeting : 6th April 2011 : Councillor M. Day reported the main points as follows:-

Augean have made an application to extend the size and the time scale of Thornhaugh site. If anyone from the PC wants to attend Thornhaugh meeting, welcome, please get details from Augean on 01780444900.

There are also two applications on Cliffe site re time scale, if the LL Nuclear Waste appeal is allowed.

The recent Scoping report is being processed but comments can still be made. Fiona Cowan from Collyweston remarked that the report was not read by all Councillors and felt that PC's we had not understood the meaning of a Scoping Report.

Augean will hold exhibitions on proposals on 19th May in Cliffe, 20th May in Collyweston, 21st May in Woodnewton. They are also holding workshop events in June.

The rumour regarding a lorry escorted by Police outriders was totally incorrect The Police have confirmed this and they have also inspected all Augean CCTV recordings. They admitted there had

been a slight spill of liquid mud on the day in question, which was cleared within 20 minutes of it happening.

A question was raised regarding the leachate from the cells, this is drained off is processed on site. The Environment Agency stated that have no issues with the dust monitors, they are working correctly, and there have been no reports of odours, very happy with efficiency of the site.

Next meeting June 20th – invitation only by NCC Phil Watson.

10/213 Highways : Report on meeting : Zebra crossing responses

The Chairman reported that he had attended a meeting on Wood Road with NCC and Charles Church representatives. Traffic calming measures were discussed and it was felt that road narrowing, rather than speed bumps were the way forward.

With regard to the proposed crossing on Wood Road between Willow Lane and Forest Approach, six letters objecting to this have been received from residents in the vicinity, although the kerbs have already been lowered in readiness for this. If this is the only acceptable place for the crossing, it must be established what this crossing would consist of i.e. beacons, restricted parking etc., both of which appear to be unacceptable to the residents. We will talk further with NCC about this.

Although generally agreed that a crossing opposite Coleman's Lane would be the ideal, the developers will only consider a crossing which has close links to the KC1 site. Councillor L. Crane suggested if there was to be no crossing at Coleman's Lane, there should be very clearly "Children Crossing" signs; this request has been made in the past but ignored by NCC.

10/214 ENC : Request for road names : KC1

Sue Trow Smith came up with some original names but no decisions were made. Councillor L. Crane has suggested we ask the Middle School to ask children for ideas. ENC need to name the streets before a post code can be given and Charles Church are asking for this.

10/215 District & Parish Council Elections : 7th May

The Chairman wished all present and hopefully new councillors the best of luck in the election.

10/216 Parish Council web-site : automatic updates

Russell Brown who created the web-site for the Council has made provision for anyone to request PC minutes be e-mailed to them each month when they appear. This was approved.

10/217 Memorial Hall : Posts in the Parking Area in Church Walk

The existing posts are rotten, far too low and are regularly bumped by parking cars. It is thought that higher posts, possibly with reflectors at the top are required. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

10/218 Dog bins : Additional bins

It was suggested that an additional bin should be put at the Station Road/Park Street corner. However, Councillors will inspect this area to see if it is really necessary and any further sites will be discussed.

10/219 Gazette Entry for May edition : Discussed and agreed.

10/220 Burial Board

It is noted that the doors on the old Fire Station have not yet been painted. Nicholas Evans will be contacted again.

There are not many free spaces left in the old cemetery, although many have been reserved. Councillor L. Crane spoke to Mr. Guy Adams, with regard to removing the old wire fence in the extension. At the next meeting a decision must be made regarding the siting of hard roads in the new area, then the Clerk can create a data-base to enable the purchase of spaces in the new area.

The dead tree in the Churchyard has been felled.

10/221 Neighbourhood Watch

The Police recorded one theft in February and one in March. There were 27 crimes in the village last year, which is down by 7%.

10/222 Other Correspondence Received : noted or circulated.

10/223 Any Other Business

Kings Cliffe Active : This came too late to be on the agenda.

The members have asked if two containers can be placed on the Sports Complex beside the new building for the storage of tools, bikes etc. They would be basically “underground” with just the doors visible and roofs grassed over. The PC discussed this and decided they had no objections.

The garages in Coleman’s Lane are to be re-roofed by Spire Homes.

The repairs to the stile into the Moors was again raised by Councillor B. Howard. This is technically the landowner’s responsibility.

Chairman Andrew Howard thanks all the Councillors for their hard work over the years and wished those who are standing again the best of luck in the forthcoming election.

The next meeting will be the AGM and will be held in the Parlour on Thursday 12th May at 7.30.pm.

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