

The Minutes of Fenny Compton Annual Parish Meeting – 18th April 2011

The Minutes of the Fenny Compton Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall, Fenny Compton on 18th April 2011 commencing at 7:45pm

Present: Miss Deborah Lea in the Chair, Michael Guest, Dave Miller, District & County Councillor Christopher Williams & Parish Clerk Catherine Lambert.

1. **To Accept Apologies for Absence:** Mike Davies, Jon Dutton and Jim Twaddle.
2. **Minutes of the Previous Year's Meeting:** The minutes to the last meeting were agreed at the Parish Council Meeting on the 24th May 2010. Copies were available for anyone who wished to see them.

3. **Parish Council Chairman's Report:**

The Chair reported that the Council has once again seen a change as Hillary Birkbeck resigned in October due to work commitments. The Council were grateful for his work during his time on the Council. There will not be a Parish Council election on 5th May as only four valid nominations were received by Stratford District Council. This means that the Parish Council will need to co-opt to fill the three remaining places.

The Parish Council have had a very busy year, responding as a consultee on numerous planning applications, driving forward the proposals in the Parish Plan, which include traffic issues and the new social housing with all the legal implications that entails as well as the proposed flood prevention scheme.

Precept: The Council felt that in the current economic climate it was important to keep its share of the rates low, so the precept was reduced by 6.4%. The Parish Council are confident that they can meet their commitments this year with a reduced precept.

The Council continues to give financial support to a variety of parish community organisations.

Fire Station: The Parish Council was exceedingly relieved that the fire station was saved from closure and continues to support the fire fighters wherever possible.

Police: The regular updates and reports from the Police stopped towards the end of the year, however PC James Butler based at Southam attended the March meeting and updates have now resumed. PC Butler highlighted some issues regarding policing that have appeared lately, one of them being that the police have not been as active as they could have been regarding Neighbourhood Watch. To address this issue a new system has been started with a dedicated member of staff. Reports of Anti Social behaviour by youths have been a cause for concern in recent months. The Police have visited the village and talked to the people concerned about their behaviour. It is vital that residents call the police and report any incidents, even if there is no response from individual reports the number of calls will trigger more action by the Police.

Post Office: The Post Office continues to operate, albeit for a limited service of an hour three times a week. It was hoped that the hours may be extended but this has not happened.

New Social Housing: The Start on Site event took place on the 31st March 2010 attended by a number of Parish Councillors. The Parish Council were asked to consider a name for the new development, there were several suggestions. However it was agreed that the name should be Thompson's Field, which is the name of the plot of land taken from the Village Map.

Playing Field: A report by Mike Davies: The Sub-committee, consisting of representatives of the Parish Council and the organised club users of the Playing Field continues to meet to discuss matters affecting the Playing Field. The exterior redecoration of the pavilion has been carried out, and new exterior doors are awaited. The hedges on the road down to the pavilion have been trimmed, and the ditch on the south west and north west sides of the field is to be dredged. The Parish Council continue to be very grateful to Dave Miller for his efforts over the Playing Field.

Playground equipment: A report by Mike Davies: Work has continued on obtaining quotes for upgrading the facilities for the 8+s' area. A questionnaire was delivered to all houses in the Parish in February, asking children to give details of what equipment they enjoyed and what additional equipment they might like, but a very limited response was received. These responses are in the course of analysis.

Needs Assessment for 13-19yr olds: The Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk met with officials representing Warwickshire County Council's Children, Young People and Families Directorate, regarding a request to help organise a Field Study of 13-19 year olds in and around Fenny Compton. The final report did not offer any practical solutions to the questions raised.

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Parish Council Surgeries: The quarterly surgeries are not well attended, but the Council feels that they do give the opportunity for residents to bring their concerns or suggestions to the Council in an informal atmosphere, so it has been decided to continue them for the time being.

Parish Plan: An Action Plan has been drawn up and this is reviewed regularly. Some of the actions have been completed such as the under 8's Play Equipment and Social Housing, but obviously some of the other issues raised are still a work in progress, including the request for allotments. Other issues are more long term, due to funding, which in these economic hard times is very difficult to find.

SpeedAware: During the year teams visited Northend Road and Station Road to warn road users of their actual speed. This was followed up by mobile cameras operated by the Police, to carry out enforcement. The report showed the average vehicle speeds in Northend Road and Station Road have fallen but are still high. Unfortunately the funding for the Speed Aware scheme has been cut by the County Council, so the Parish Council has agreed to buy into the service for the coming year, as speeding in the village is a problem that concerns the residents. There is also a cost free option available which involves volunteers being trained to operate the speed monitoring equipment, the Council will investigate this option for next year.

Traffic Group: The group has now disbanded but the Parish Council are grateful for all their hard work.

Traffic/Highways: The Parish Council funded the "No Lorries" signs at the junction of Memorial Road/High Street leading to Church Street and at the entrance to Church Street from the Avon Dassett Road. These have helped reduce the number of lorries using Church Street, but sadly not all lorry drivers adhere to the signage and still get stuck. Councillor Williams agreed to bid for funding to improve the lighting and road markings under the bridge, since the priority traffic light system was unlikely to be funded due to the high costs and it was also unlikely that funding could be obtained for the two traffic calming chicanes. The Parish Council unanimously agreed that the focus should be on measures to improve pedestrian safety under the railway bridge by improving the approaches and installing lighting under the bridge.

Emergency Plan: As part of Emergency Planning the Parish Council took part in "Exercise Watermark" in March. This event took place on the evening of 7th March 2011. Fenny Compton Parish Council's exercise was to test the ability of the emergency committee to deal with flooding in the village and surrounding area. A scenario was fed to the Committee who needed to plan to deal with the situation. It was a very useful exercise and highlighted the Council's responsibilities.

Flood Prevention: A new grid by the Reading Room has been installed to speed the flow of water and the kerb has been lowered and a gate installed to hasten the flow of flood water at the bottom of Church Street by the brook. The Parish council continue to support the efforts undertaken by Aqueous.

The Coming year: Areas of concern include the closure of the Merrie Lion, and the issue of retaining a pub in the centre of the village. The Parish Council have agreed to meet with the new owners after 5th May. Wind Farms: Permission has been granted by the Planning Inspector for the erection of a 60m meteorological mast for a temporary period of two years on land between Bishops Itchington, Knightcote and Gaydon, Warwickshire. There is another proposed wind farm on land at Stoneton, near Wormleighton, Warwickshire, and there is the issue of High Speed 2.

Thanks: The Parish Council is grateful to the Methodist Church for allowing them to hold their meetings in the chapel school room when the Village Hall was closed for repairs. Thanks are given to our District and County Councillor for his help and support during the past year and for obtaining funding for various projects. The Council is grateful to John Gilkes & Peter Hughes for their work in maintaining the Parish Council cemetery and to Melvin Smart for his work keeping the War Memorial in such a good condition and keeping the flower troughs so well planted. The Chair thanked all the Parish Councillors and the Clerk, who work really hard on the Parish's behalf, and give generously of their time, not only taking on various projects, but by attended workshops, training courses and area meetings which have an impact on the Parish.

4. **Annual Accounts of Fenny Compton Parish Council for 2010/2011:**

The Clerk is at present calculating the Annual Accounts, which will be presented to the internal auditor for her approval.

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5. **To receive Reports from Local Organisations:**

Aqueous: Michael Guest gave the following report:

A small group of Volunteers called Aqueous have continued to work on measures to reduce the risk of flooding in Fenny Compton. This group is Michael Guest, Brian Peers, Jo. Taylor, Julian Leslie, and Peter Hughes, assisted by other members of working parties.

The three main areas of activity are;

- Increasing the capacity of the Holding Ponds to smooth the flow of water.
- Improving the flow of flood water through the village.
- Keeping the existing ditches free of rubbish.

How have we done?

- Ditches have been kept clear, thanks to working parties led by Brian Peers.
- Planning permission has been obtained to increase the capacity of the holding ponds in Hall's Yard. A preliminary report has been received on the feasibility of creating an additional holding pond on the west side of the Avon Dassett Road. Thanks go to Warwickshire County Council for a grant to carry out this study.
- An open grill has been installed by the school/reading room and a modification has been completed to improve the flow of flood water across Church Road.

What happens next?

- Work will continue to keep the ditches clear. Any volunteers should contact Brian Peers.
- Aqueous will work up a detailed proposal for a holding pond on the west side of the Avon Dassett road, and get agreement from the landowner, and the District Council, as well as examining other options to better protect the West side of the village.
- Carry out the work to increase the capacity of the holding ponds in Hall's Yard. Thanks go to Jim Peers for agreeing to this work on his land. To carry out this work, it will be necessary to divert the footpath through the field, and the field will be largely closed to all pedestrians and animals. This will enable the work to be carried out safely, and to allow the ground to recover.
- In due course Warwickshire Highways Dept. will carry out some road re-profiling to improve the flow of flood water through the village.
- Further small Projects to improve water flow.

The Chair thanked Michael Guest for all his work with the project. Michael Guest also thanked Councillor Williams for his assistance with the project which addresses the concerns of the residents.

Footpath group: Brian Peers reported that the group is still in existence however they are now down to three regular members. Brian recognised the work carried out by Peter Christopher and Marc Bolland over the past years. The footpaths are generally in good condition and more regularly used. The group continue to have good relationships with local landowners. Rights of Way are likely to be affected by the cut backs at Warwickshire County Council. Councillor Williams confirmed that the group would continue to get insurance through the County Council, and legal support would also continue. The group still have some limited funds and do not need funding at present. The Chair thanked Brian for the groups' important work.

6. **Report from Trustees of Charities:**

Peter Hughes reported that the Fenny Compton Relief in Need Charity has received income of £29.78 and holds a current total fund as at the 15th March 2011 of £309.61

7. **District and County Councillor Christopher Williams Invited to Speak:**

Cllr CW

Councillor Williams reported that the County Council has not been immune from the cuts introduced by the coalition government. The County Council was faced with having to find £66million over the next 3 years. This has led to the loss of 1,800 posts. At the same time the organisation has been slimmed down, the Directors have been reduced from 6 to 3, and senior line managers from 24 to 17. Implications of this change as well as other efficiency savings will lead to:

- a) The closing of 10 Care Homes many of which are not fully occupied and replacing them with Extra care housing complexes thus giving the older population independence and dignity in old age.
- b) The modernisation of the Library Service and the invitation to local communities in the

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smaller villages to run their own Library.

- c) A reduction in rural transport grants to the bus companies. This will lead to a reduction in some services where underutilisation makes the service inefficient and poor value for money. The main reductions will be on Sunday services and late night bus services after 7.00 p.m.
- d) The streamlining of the County's Youth Service and the offer to local Youth Committees to manage their own affairs.

The Fire Service: Earlier this year a full examination into the efficiency of the Warwickshire Fire Service took place resulting in the proposed closure of 3 Fire Stations and other back office staffing savings. I am pleased to report that after this evaluation the Fenny Compton Fire Station was recognised for its strategic importance and the initial proposal to close this Fire Station was discarded. The Fire Service has not been immune from the savings requirements but these are less severe.

Schools: At least 17 of the County's Secondary Schools have requested to become Academies. The Dassett School had a good Ofsted report and proposed building extensions will enhance the School's facilities.

NHS reorganisation: Although this will go ahead its exact shape is in the hands of the Secretary of State. Councillor Williams believes that the PCT and SHA in their present form will be abolished. GPs will become controllers of the budget but the oversight and scrutiny of how it is managed has yet to be decided. GPs will work in consortiums and Coventry and Warwickshire will form a combined cluster.

High Speed 2: The consultation period for this is now underway and finishes in July. There are to be road shows in Southam and Ladbroke in June or July. The amended route is as advertised last December. There is a Commons Select Committee looking into the need for High Speed Railway sitting in May/June. Their findings will be significant and the result of the consultation is expected in December.

Highways Safety: Councillor Williams this year has secured funding to enhance, not only the street lighting to the approaches to the railway bridges in Station Road, but also to provide illumination under the bridges themselves. It is proposed that the wall sides to the bridges will be painted white to a height of 2m. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to provide a secure pedestrian route under the bridges. The project itself will now be delayed due to the uncertainty as to whether or not Rail Track will replace the second bridge which was damaged in a recent road traffic incident.

Parish Council: Councillor Williams paid tribute to the work that the Parish Council has undertaken in implementing the proposals made in the Parish Plan. The legal necessities have now been carried out for proposed flood control system for Fenny Compton. The Parish Council have diligently reviewed the myriad of problems associated with the new social housing development in Station Road together with consistent scrutiny of all planning applications that have to be considered. Councillor Williams gave thanks for the support that the Parish Council has given during the past year.

Proposed Wind Farms at Knightcote and Wormleighton: A proposal for 13 turbines between Wormleighton and Priors Hardwick has been forwarded to the District Council. The District Council is opposing the proposal at present. A previous application was refused due to the visual impact on the surrounding landscape. The planning appeal for a meteorological mast at Knightcote has been allowed by the inspector, however this is not the same as permitting an application for turbines.

8. **Other Matters Raised by an Elector of the Parish:**

- a) Lorna Aldrich highlighted that the trees on Memorial Road are too low for residents waiting for the bus.