

THE PARISH MEETING OF WHISSENDINE 2017

This was held in the Village School, Main Street, Whissendine, on 22nd March 2017, beginning at 7:30pm.

Present: Mr Will Farr (Chairman)

Mr Kevin Thomas (Ward Councillor)

Mrs Linda Arnold, Mr Rob Comber, Mr David Hatton, Mrs Pat Lake, Dr Sue Lammin,

Mrs Cynthia Moss (Parish Councillors)

Mrs Elaine Everington (Parish Clerk, taking minutes)

Dr Andrew Moyce of the Whissendine Environment Group, Ms. Jean Penny of the Good Neighbour Scheme, Mr. Brian Maunders of Neighbourhood Watch, Mr. M. Dickinson of the Village Hall, Mrs. J.A. Millington of Rainbows, Mrs. A. Maddison of the Sports Club, Mr S. Thuis, presentation of defibrillators.

Apologies were given on behalf of Mr. Philip Tatham and Mr. Colin Miles of the Whissendine Net.

1. Welcome

The Chairman thanked the residents for attending the meeting and said all were welcome to give their view on any of the topics being discussed during the evening.

2. Minutes of the 2016 Parish Meeting

These had been available in advance of the meeting from the website and paper copies were at the meeting. They were accepted on proposal of Mr D. Hatton and signed by the Chairman.

3. Police Comments

With P.C. Appleton being unable to attend the meeting, he sent a written summary of his report for North Rutland, covering the period from the last parish meeting:

There has been a rise in the number of burglaries, theft of and from vehicles in the area, including Whissendine. However, the numbers are still very low, averaging 2 or 3 per month.

PC Appleton gives a reminder to us, to ensure that our homes, doors and windows, outbuildings and vehicles are locked to prevent such incidents.

If anyone is interested in PC Appleton's "organising a property marking scheme" in the village, we should contact him.

The current focus is on hare coursing. There are targeting patrols in notified areas and police have reacted to calls from the public and landowners as well as the P.C.S.O.

A vehicle has been seized at Glaston and suspicious people have been stopped and warned but without any proof, cannot be charged.

Landowners and the public are encouraged to call in, on 101, to help tackle the issue, if they see anything suspicious.

The Whissendine P.C.S.O, Steve Haughton, is progressing with his recovery but it is understood, he is still in hospital.

4. Parish Council Chairman: Annual Report

The Chairman welcomed the audience attending the meeting and thanked all the Councillors for the hard work they have done throughout the year, on behalf of the Village.

He went on to mention, this year the Parish has a new Clerk, Elaine Everington who took over the role on 1st September last year.

After a steep learning curve, is now getting into the role very well.

The Chairman then welcomed Elaine to her very first A.G.M.

The Chairman noted that during the year, some projects have been finally completed, others started and some planned for the coming year.

Speed Reactor:

This was finally installed on Ashwell Road during the summer - this was 10 months later than planned.

Village Pump:

The Parish Council refurbished the Village pump on Main Street, giving it a fresh look.

The Banks:

The Parish Council replaced the bridge with a new one, this work was carried out in the summer and later this year a plaque will be obtained and fixed onto the bridge, in celebration of the Queens 90th birthday.

Also, it was agreed that the whole of the Banks needs to be kept tidy, right through the year and a contractor has been appointed to carry out this work.

The Village Green:

A new seat will be ordered, to be placed onto the Village Green with a plaque attached to mark 20 years of independence for Rutland.

Cow Lane:

The option of a passing place on Cow Lane is ongoing, with a formal request having been made to Rutland County Council.

The Grapevine:

The Chairman expressed his many thanks to Mr Lake for stepping in to look after the editing of the Grapevine until a new Editor was found.

Mrs Nicki McCluskey took over the role of editor of the Grapevine in September and after a few teething problems, Nicki seems to be on top and is looking forward to taking the magazine forward and adding a little more colour.

4a. Community Action: Neighbourhood Watch

Mr. Brian Maunders addressed the meeting and thanked the Parish Council for the donation of £300, awarded in December 2016. He said the money would be well used.

On finance, there is currently £112 (and some pence) in the Post Office account and Mr Maunders is looking at the benefits of opening a current account at the Village shop. These accounts are managed by Barclays Bank and the minimum start up amount is £400.

The W.N.W. is also looking at the feasibility of setting up a "Triangular System" between various villages e.g. Whissendine, Langham and Ranksborough Court with the emphasis of working together. Mr Maunders wished to thank Mr Andrew Whitfield (local window cleaner) for cleaning the No Entry signs in the Village.

5. Ward Councillor Kevin Thomas

Mr Kevin Thomas has been in the role of Ward Councillor for just over one year and when he started in the role, he committed to make a difference with three actions:

Dog Fouling: more visits from the Dog Warden has been requested.

Brook Investigations: It is the duty of RCC to facilitate and solve the issues with the brook and RCC Officers have written to riparian landowners to request that they clear the Brook on their stretches of the Brook.

Parking at the School: There is no money available to resolve the issues and the problems. The discussions continue and there is a back- up plan in place for gaining funding from the Diocese of Peterborough.

Cont:

Ongoing actions:

- Road repair in the Village continues.
- Moss on pavements: A trial has taken place which has cleared some moss, this continues.
- New Grass cutting contractors have been appointed for the Village
- Planning: Mr Thomas has advised a number of residents the areas where they can object.

The areas concerning Mr Thomas: Spire homes and the service they give to Whissendine residents. Mr Thomas is addressing this with RCC officers.

Broadband Speeds with Digital Rutland: Some residents have received free upgrades to increase speeds.

Poor telephone connectivity for mobiles with 02 – waiting for response on this.

The Nook, this was re dressed this year but will take time to fully resolve.

Fox Hill – Dog Fouling

Grass cutting

Hare coursing

Planning, development proposed, local plan

Disputed Planning & Boundary review.

Mr Thomas will be away from the Village for a fair amount of time over the next few months, his colleague Gale Waller cover all committee meetings at RCC.

Mr Thomas would like to thank the Parish Council for supporting him and working closely with him, the results are now showing.

6. Whissendine Website

Phil and Colin extend their apologies for not being able to attend the Village meeting due to work commitments. The following is their report on the status of the Website and Twitter account. The website continues to be updated on a weekly basis with news and snippets and calendar entries. Data analytics for the last 12 months, from February 2016 to March 2017, suggests that approximately 30 thousand pages were viewed during 13 thousand visits to the website, or 35 unique visits to the website per day. The average time each visitor spent on the website was two minutes and about two and a half pages were viewed per visit.

Aside from the home page, news page and Village calendar, the most frequently visited pages include Whissendine Windmill, Whissendine walks, the Village shop, the history of Whissendine, the Village Hall, local food, St Andrews Church, Parish Council meetings, feast week, the produce and craft show and news items on the proposed cycle track from Whissendine to Oakham.

The website is routinely plagiarized by local estate agents in their marketing collaterals but we all know that 'imitation is the sincerest form of flattery'. However, two years after the revamped website was launched, we continue to struggle to receive timely information from the many Village groups and associations and would like to invite the WI, Happy Circle and other active groups to continue to send us their meeting reports as well as dates of forthcoming meetings. We would like to thank the Village Hall Committee and the White Lion for sending regular updates.

As always, we would like to take this opportunity to ask for help maintaining the website. If any residents know of an eager teenager who might like to take on some part-time voluntary work, do let us know. Perhaps the position might prove useful on a CV when applying to university.

The Village Twitter account: '@WhissendineUK', also continues to grow and is now approaching 250 followers. This can be an effective path for reaching an audience of Villagers and local/regional businesses with information about Village events or other news, as well as publicising Village

activities even further when some of our 'followers' in turn re tweet our content to their followers. To date Twitter has mostly been used as a companion to the Village website, broadcasting links for news items on the website to our followers. There is however plenty of scope to use the account to share with our local community.

As ever, all suggestions and content ideas are warmly welcomed by Philip and Colin.

7. Community Action: The Village Hall

Mike Dickinson gave an update on the recent work carried out on the Village Hall.

This has been mainly repair and maintenance, new inner doors and painting. Along with this, dressing/changing rooms have been created. Mike would like to thank the Parish Council for the contribution of £1,000 towards the overall costs.

There is still some work needed, especially on the floors.

The Hall is utilized on a regular basis and the payments from these activities cover the running costs of the Hall. In addition to the regular bookings, there is still some availability, including evenings. There is a vacancy for a volunteer to help with the running of the Hall, including dealing with the bookings.

Anyone interested should contact Mike Dickinson.

8. Community Action: The Sports Club

Ann Maddison represented the Sports Club and explained that since the Sports Club closed down last year a Committee has been formed, with Bob Atkinson acting as the chairman.

The priority is to secure a new roof which will cost in the region of £17,000.

The Committee is looking at all options, including converting to a charity status. They are struggling to get any help and will appreciate any ideas and support from the Village as they feel very much on their own at present.

9. Community Action: Whissendine Environment Group

The group has met regularly throughout the year and welcomed 2 new members and had no resignations. Marion Lawrie took over from Penny Stimpson as chairman at the AGM, held in June 2016.

Chapel Walk: There have been several working parties on site and bat boxes erected

The Parish Council approved the naming of the area and signage has been erected. It is planned to continue maintenance and improvement of the area and to erect an appropriate sign recording the grant from Cory trust and the support of the Parish Council.

The Banks: W.E.G. has been involved in advising the Parish Council to assist with their efforts to maintain and improve the Banks area.

The EYE: In May 2016 Penny Stimpson (Chairman) and Andrew Moyce (Secretary) were interviewed on local radio about the groups aims and work in Whissendine.

The Verge Cutting: WEG have cooperated with the Parish Council in their attempts to formulate a policy on verge cutting that will both preserve flowering plants until they have seeded whilst complying with road safety needs.

Village Green: WEG have considered the possibility of flower planting around the bench area.

Finance: WEG received a grant of £200 from the Parish Council.

Cont:

Future Plans: Work is to commence on the approach area to Whissendine windmill to remove overgrowth and generally improve the habitat for wild life. It is planned to involve youth groups in building, distributing and studying “bug boxes”

10. Community Action: Whissendine Good Neighbour Scheme

The WGNS thanked the Parish Council for the donation of £125 and said it is much appreciated.

Volunteers, Clients and Activity: Last year on average, 15 people per month used WGNS.

The group have 35 clients and 39 listed volunteers, 29 drivers and others doing non driving tasks such as holding the phone. 46% of activity is requests for driving clients, particularly driving within the village to monthly Age UK and Happy Circle groups. This gives opportunities to volunteers who don't want to do longer journeys.

Also driving to local medical visits: 111(Oakham, Melton, Empingham, M. Overton, Somerby).

Hospital visits: 65 (L.R.I., General, Glenfield, Peterborough) LRI is the most used hospital

Other requests include gardening, befriending, bus pass applications, taking books to the church library, filling in forms, moving furniture. The busiest month is August.

General: The group meets every two months, monitoring and responding to changes in clients and volunteers.

The Good Neighbour Scheme continues to thrive because they believe the most important element is that they continue to offer a service that is obviously needed in Whissendine.

11. Rainbows: At a time, just after Christmas last year Jo-Ann Millington set up the Rainbows in the Village Hall. This group consists of young girls aged between 5-7 years old. Although the group inherited certain resources from previous groups and they share with the Brownies certain other resources such as scissors and pencils, they felt the girls needed more items, especially aprons and rolling pins for cooking, as well as some sporty bits and pieces.

Jo-Ann applied for a grant from the Parish Council which was awarded last summer. The money given to them allowed them to buy the things needed, including skipping ropes, balls and more.

The money also helped to subsidise the cost for the girls to take part in a County-wide trip. Jo Ann passed on her thanks and said how very grateful for the generosity of the Parish Council in assisting the group to flourish.

12. The Parish Clerk Long Clawson Charity Report: The Clerk gave an up to date report on the 2016 vouchers: This year, 25 people benefited from the vouchers, all receiving £90 each to spend in the Village shop – total of £ 2,250: This compares to last year: 20 people receiving £100 each, the total of £2,000.

The balance in the account: £5660.45 (same period last year: £5756.66)

11. Questions on any topic from the floor: None received

12. Following the meeting, Mr Sean Thuis gave a presentation on defibrillators. The Councillors agreed this would be discussed at the next Parish meeting.

The meeting closed at 9:10pm