

PARISH OF NORTHILL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN ICKWELL VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 30TH MARCH 2009 COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Hawkes (Chairman), 19 local electors, District Councillors P Turner, J Davison and the Parish Clerk Mrs L Trevena

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor J Yatchisin and County Councillor J Scott.

2. **MINUTES OF NORTHILL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 31ST MARCH 2008**

The Minutes of Northill Annual Parish Meeting held on 31st March 2007 were circulated, having been initialled as correct at the Northill Parish Council Meeting held on 14th April 2008. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 31ST MARCH 2008**

Mr Hall pointed out a typing error on item 3 page 205. The date should read 16th April 2007 and not 16th April 2006. This was corrected.

4. **MINUTES OF NORTHILL PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON 2ND FEBRUARY 2009**

The Minutes of Northill Public Meeting held on 2nd February 2008 were circulated, having been initialled as correct at the Northill Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd March 2009. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM NORTHILL PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON 2ND FEBRUARY 2009**

There were no matters arising.

6. **PRESENTATION FROM CHERYL JOYCE – FORESTRY COMMISSION**

Cheryl Joyce explained that the Forestry Commission work is split into seventeen districts throughout the country and the district area in which she works covers seven counties. She went on to give an extremely interesting and informative talk not only on the background and history of the medieval Home Wood Fishery but on the work being undertaken currently. She then answered questions from electors.

7. **REPORT FROM LOCAL BEAT OFFICER POLICE CONSTABLE PATERSON**

The Clerk reported that unfortunately Constable Paterson had been unable to attend this meeting.

8. **ANNUAL REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN**

The report presented by the Chairman outlined the key events, activities and achievements of the Council during the year. This report is appended to these minutes.

9. **ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

The report presented by the Clerk outlined the probable expenditure for 2008/2009, for which a precept of £39,275 had been raised. The Council had set a precept of £40,000 for 2009/2010. This report was available at the meeting and is appended to these minutes.

10. **ANNUAL REPORT OF HIGHWAYS AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

The Clerk, on behalf of the Highways and Opens Spaces Committee Chairman, presented the report which outlined the work of the committee during the year. This report was available at the meeting and is appended to these minutes.

11. ANNUAL REPORT OF CHURCHYARD AND CEMETERY COMMITTEE

The Clerk, on behalf of the Churchyard and Cemetery Committee Chairman, presented the report which outlined the work of the committee during the year. This report was available at the meeting and is appended to these minutes.

12. OPEN FORUM FOR ELECTORS OF NORTHILL PARISH

Mrs Kendrick and other electors expressed their concern at the non attendance of Police Officers at this and general Council meetings.

RECOMMENDED that the Parish Council write to the Constabulary expressing concern at the lack of attendance of a Police Officer at meetings and also request that a written report is forwarded to the Council if an officer is unavailable.

Mr Onion was disappointed over the progress regarding Ickwell Green track repairs. The resurfacing needs to be resolved as a matter of urgency. Councillor Milton pointed out that the working party had met and were obtaining a specification for a different surface, which it was hoped would not require DEFRA permission. This matter would be put before Council for discussion when it next meets on 20th April 2009.

Mr Onion then said he was sorry that the current Chairman would not be standing for re-election and wished her well.

Mrs Mullen expressed concern over the amount of vehicles continually parking on Caldecote Green, especially on the triangular section of The Green. Mr Hall agreed with this. Councillor Momen said the Council should look at placing parking time restrictions on The Green. The Clerk said that this was not an option as under current legislation there should not be any parking on the green at anytime. Mrs Papworth said that previously the Council was going to DEFRA to ask for their determination on parking on greens. The Clerk replied that this had been done and DEFRA had confirmed that current legislation does not permit parking on village greens, however, in some cases permission has been sought and consent obtained for a car park.

Mr Bigg congratulated the Council on two years of Quality Status and welcomed the quarterly newsletters. He looked forward to the Council implementing some recommendations from the THINK Parish Plan as well as seeing progress made with regard to Ickwell Green tracks. He was, however, disappointed to learn that the vacancy on the Council had not yet been filled. He welcomed the Central Bedfordshire Council and said farewell to the County and District Councils and hoped that the new authority would work well in conjunction with the parish councils.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.30 pm

NORTHILL PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2009

The Parish Council has had a busy and productive year. We were very sorry to lose Helen Papworth as a Councillor this year, but wish her well in her many involvements and activities within the Parish. I shall be stepping down as chair at the end of my term of office in May, as I shall be working full time at Northill School and feel that the role of Chair deserves more attention than I shall be able to give. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our clerk for her tremendous help and support during my two years as chair. She is a diligent and conscientious clerk, as well as a kind and thoughtful one.

Ickwell Green has been very much in the limelight over the past year. June 2008 saw it host a most successful Masquerade Ball, an event that was supported but thankfully not organised by this Parish Council. The perimeter track has also been under discussion this year. In February a very well attended meeting took place where it became clear that the people of The Green and surrounding area all supported the parish Council's involvement in repairs and resurfacing. I am sorry that things have moved so slowly in this matter, but it is important to explore the full implications of a decision such as this. Hopefully 2009 will be "The Year of the Track."

The vehicle activated sign in Bedford Road, Northill is finally up and running and will hopefully help to keep speeds down in the village and Upper Caldecote has had its village sign refurbished. The work on Northill Pond has been completed and it all looks much healthier now.

During the bad weather earlier this year, councillors tried hard to get Biggleswade Road added to the regular salting route. A one-off salting was made and the Council will continue to insist that this road must be salted. When there is a problem of this nature it is worth remembering that the more people who phone or e-mail with individual complaints, the more likely it is that Central Bedfordshire (as from 1st April) will respond and act.

Caldecote Cemetery has faced flooding and moles in the past year and both have now been dealt with. Both Northill and Caldecote cemetery and churchyard are in good repair and are being very well maintained by our contractor, DJ Grainger.

Ickwell Village Hall has received a grant from the Parish Council for 10% of their roofing costs from the Capital Amenity Fund. Numerous other local organisations have benefited from grants from the Parish Council this year. It will shortly be time for these grants to be reviewed again so I would encourage people to spread the word and to submit their completed forms, which are available from the clerk.

Our Parish's footpaths and bridleways continue to be well used and are well cared for by the P3 steering Group. We are lucky to have so many beautiful walks in our Parish and the Parish Council is pleased to support the work of the Forestry Commission which is going on in Home Woods.

The long awaited Parish Plan, produced by THINC, has now dropped through your letterbox. I hope that people will take the time to read this important document as it is a true reflection of the views and wishes of the residents of this parish. Thank you very much to all those who have given so much of their time and thought to this document. Our own Parish newsletter is going well and continues to be well received.

Thank you to all of you who have come this evening. Being here shows a willingness to be involved, and that is something that this council applauds. Please continue to give us your views, positive and negative, as it is only by communication that problems are solved.

NORTHILL PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2009

	Estimated Expenditure	Probable Expenditure	Surplus/ (Deficit)
	£	£	£
Highways & Open Spaces	5,550	5,228	322
Churchyards & Cemeteries	7,450	7,581	(131)
Administration	22,125	22,389	(264)
Street Lighting	150	90	60
Grants	4,000	6,553	(2,553)
Miscellaneous	0	0	
TOTAL:	39,275	41,841	(2,566)
Less surplus from previous years			
PRECEPT REQUIREMENT	£39,275		

The Council has set a precept requirement of £40,000 for the financial year 2009/2010

In addition to this the Council has the following estimated monies in reserves:

General reserves - £33,025

Capital reserves - £53,198: This money can only be used towards capital projects

Other reserves - £20,677: Commuted sum for Pound Close car park and play area upkeep

NORTHILL PARISH COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2009

The Committee has met on three occasions during the year with general routine matters having been dealt with as necessary throughout the year.

Contractors will shortly be out and about rubbing down and repainting the many seats and noticeboards throughout the parish.

CALDECOTE GREEN & HATCH GREEN

Extra work has been carried out on both greens to clear brambles and other vegetation to allow ease of access.

ICKWELL GREEN

Issues regarding the condition and maintenance of Ickwell Green perimeter tracks were raised at a public meeting in February of this year. Local residents living around the green presented the Council with a specification for the tracks resurfacing. Estimated costs were obtained on this specification but after due consideration the Council did not feel that specification would be a satisfactory and cost effective repair. A site meeting was subsequently held with a contractor and a further specification will be put before Council at the next meeting on 20th April. It is likely that DEFRA permission will be required before any works can take place.

Grass cutting issues were raised by a local resident and a request was received to consider the possibility of the creation of a wild life area on the green. It was subsequently decided that the current grass cutting regime is sufficient and after receiving a report from the P3/Getting Involved Officer of BCC no further action will be taken regarding the creation of a wildlife area.

NORTHILL GREEN

After an extensive pond clearance earlier in the year and the spoil being given drying time the contractor returned to level and re-seed the grass area.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

A vehicle activated sign has now been installed in Bedford Road after consultation with the THINC members and reference to the Parish Plan.

Reporting of potholes and highway problems can be reported direct to the Highways Helpdesk www.Highway.Faults@bedscc.gov.uk or by phoning 01234 228661.

NORTHILL PARISH COUNCIL

CHURCHYARD & CEMETERY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2009

The Committee has met on three occasions throughout the year.

Council has been impressed with the work over the past year in the cemeteries and churchyards by the newly appointed contract D J Granger Landscapes Limited and a letter of thanks was forwarded to Mr Granger and his staff.

The contractor will shortly be repainting the community benches in the churchyards and cemeteries.

Due to problems with the disposal of wreaths and dead flowers in both Northill and Caldecote cemeteries, a request was made to MBDC Environmental Department who agreed to collect and empty the wheelie bins on site without the need for someone having to put them out and take them back in.

CALDECOTE CEMETERY

Hopefully the mole problem in Caldecote Cemetery earlier this year has been eradicated after a visit by the pest control. The molehills have been flattened and re-seeded. Problems due to recent extreme weather conditions saw the cemetery flooded and then frozen over. The Clerk visited the cemetery at the time and subsequently spoke with the adjacent landowner who confirmed that he would look at the possibility of a blocked culvert/drainage ditch further up Vinegar Hill. The landowner, after investigation, later confirmed that a section of the culvert pipe had collapsed and would be repaired.

NORTHILL CEMETERY

Quotations are being obtained for the topping up of the gravel paths in Northill cemetery and the possible re-instatement of a path linking both the old and new parts of the cemetery.