

Cosgrove Parish Council

MINUTES OF COSGROVE ANNUAL OPEN MEETING

Held on 4th May 2016 at the Village Hall, Bridge Road commencing at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs AG Hickie (in the chair), Mr A Bracey, Mrs F Childs, Mrs H Harbottle, Mr P Roberts, Mr D Smith, Mr W Smith, Mr C Stokes & Mrs L Welton
Also present were Mr D Everett (Clerk), Cllrs Mr I McCord (SNC), Mr A Walker (NCC) and 7 members of the public

1. Apologies

None

2. Minutes of the 2015 Annual Open Meeting (previously displayed n/b)

Previously circulated and signed as a correct record at the May 2015 meeting

3. Matter Arising

No matters arising

4. Petitioners or Questions from Electors (required in writing by 12 noon 4th May 2016)

None

5. Presentation of Accounts

The clerk (RFO) outlined budget controls and Precept levels that were agreed:

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------|
| (a) | To receive Audited Accounts 2014 / 2015 | } No comments |
| (b) | Accounts for Audit 2015 / 2016 | } No comments |
| (c) | Budget Proposals 2016 / 2017 | } No comments made |

* Accounts adopted - No Qs

6. Chairman's Report

Other than the on-going and general day-to-day activities undertaken by the Parish Council, of particular note were:

MK Don's development - no planning application has yet been received but if it is this is going to be a high impact critical issue to Cosgrove, likely to run on for many years

Caravan Park - re-siting of caravans has been effected. Meetings, attended by the representatives of the Park owners, SNC, MKC, and Cosgrove & Castlethorpe PCs, have taken place to discuss the lack of cross-border advices, the impact of changes/development on the village and the hope that a mutually beneficial plan can be effected for the future.

Yardley Road turnings at A508 and Castlethorpe junctions. There have been accidents at both turnings - a serious one at the latter. Meetings and ongoing discussions are taking place.

Street Lighting - the current fluorescent lights are to be replaced. Review of alternative lighting is being undertaken. Particular thanks to Wayne Smith for his work in this regard.

Old Post Office - construction of houses is under way. Visually this will be a great improvement.

Cosgrove House - both plots have been bought and planning for new houses approved.

Construction at The Stocks and The Tannery have been completed although there are outstanding issues in regards to the access road to be attended to.

A 'litter pick' had been undertaken. Again particular thanks to Wayne Smith.

The Chairman commented that, as always, the Parish Council were grateful to receive input from the villagers and pleased to see them at the monthly meetings.

He thanked the District and County Councillors for the work done by them in regards to the village, ditto the Parish Councillors for their voluntary time and input, and gave particular thanks to

the Clerk for the invaluable work he does.

AG Hickie / 07502 418155

7. Report by Northamptonshire Police

(With crime figures from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016)

Crime figures >

<i>Burglary Dwelling</i>	<i>0 > 5</i>	
<i>Burglary Other</i>	<i>4 > 3</i>	<i>(from garages and sheds etc)</i>
<i>Criminal Damage</i>	<i>2 > 3</i>	
<i>Drugs</i>	<i>0 > 0</i>	
<i>Sexual Offences</i>	<i>0 > 0</i>	
<i>Theft from M/V</i>	<i>1 > 1</i>	
<i>Theft of M/V</i>	<i>1 > 0</i>	
<i>Theft / Handling</i>	<i>2 > 11</i>	
<i>Other offences</i>	<i>0 > 0</i>	
<i>Violence</i>	<i>4 > 10</i>	

Total Crimes 33 (Up on previous years 15)

There were also 14 ASB reports without details

Northants Police : to report crime or for general enquiries call 101

E-mail: SCT-SouthNorthantsTowcester@northants.police.uk

Crime Stoppers (anonymous and free) 0800 555 111

8. Report from District Councillor

Can I begin with a thank you to all those who work in the village to get things done. To the Parish Council and Derek the Clerk for his work throughout the year that makes my role all the easier. There are many voluntary groups within the village all working to make our community all the better place to live in. The year began with an election and I was pleased to be returned again as the member for the ward. That election down I entered another to be the Leader of the Conservative Group and Leader of the Council. In the past year it has been a huge amount of work and I hope that the ward effort has not suffered as I look across the whole of the district. The pace has been relentless and there is much to report on.

Finance and Council Tax For the first time in six years SNC increased the council tax by £5 per year for a band D property to £175.37 per year, that is £3.37 per week. The SNC Nett Budget is £11.78 million. Core funding from government reduced again by £600k. The funding squeeze on local government will continue until 2020. The Government have offered SNC a four year funding deal which was in line with the financial projections SNC had made, SNC shall apply to have this as it is the first time ever that that there can be some funding certainty.

New Homes Bonus The government is consulting on the future of this scheme. They wish to move £800m nationally from the cost of NHB to Social Care provided by county councils like NCC. They are considering

- reducing the scheme from 6 years to 4 years
- not paying any new homes bonus for houses won on appeal
- not paying any new homes bonus where there is not a local plan in place
- setting a threshold for growth and paying NHB when your housing growth exceeds this, in effect the first X homes per year do not count

Clearly SNC will need to review its policy on New Homes Bonus once the government have finalised their plans. However, until the results of this are known the New Homes Bonus continues to be available for our villages. Cosgrove has been awarded £11,382 of which none has been spent

SNC have been able to support the voluntary sector with INCREASED funding despite the general background of cutting costs. That is something of which I am proud.

He also spoke on SNCs New Leisure Contract; Waste Recycling; Towcester Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) & A43 Improvements Coupled with the SUE improvements to Towcester the Tove roundabout (Tesco/VW) has been improved and works are complete. Work has begun at the Abthorpe roundabout (McDonalds) in February and run for approx. 18 months.

Local Plan SNC Local Plan part 2a, will reconsider all the villages and confines and there will be consultation back to the parishes at various stages throughout but the plan is scheduled for adoption in Autumn 2018. The first part of the consultation is currently live asking about the numbers of house and how they should be distributed within the district. There is also a call for sites similar to that which was done in 2012. SNC currently have a 7 year land supply.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) SNC will adopted CIL with effect from 1 April 2016. This was consulted upon with the development industry and will be used to pay for infrastructure in the district. It will apply to many of the smaller developments that did not pay S106 monies in the past. The charge applies to residential and new retail space with differing amounts for Towcester and Brackley Town and the more rural areas. There are national exemptions within the regulations for houses built for your own use provided you live in it for at least 3 years after completion.

The Parish Council is entitled to 15% of all CIL monies or 25% if there is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place, capped at £100 per existing house in the parish.

The Forum, Moat Lane Regeneration SNC moved to the Forum over the Easter weekend in 2015. The first year has been successful with more people visiting the building and using the Library. The Forum has more than SNC offices and also houses Adult Learning, the Library and Registrars services for births, deaths and marriages. SNC are in discussions with the police about a front desk operation. The Tove Long Stay car park on Northampton Road opened in March providing 60 new spaces initially and 170 spaced ultimately. The additional spaces will be accessible when road works at the Sacaracens Head side of the crossroads with A5 / Brackley Road are complete. These road works are linked to the development of Towcester South and will be done this year as the Towcester South houses cannot be occupied otherwise. Moat Lane regeneration continues, the phase 2 works, the corner site and temporary car park site will get underway this year.

Joint Working Unfortunately Stratford District Council did not make any decisions about progressing in partnership with SNC and CDC in a three way alliance. Rather than delay SNC and CDC have pressed on continue joint working on a two way basis to have all services joined up by the middle of this year. There is a management restructure ongoing to ensure that the council is able to face the changes to local government and reduced funding with a more commercial focus to develop alternative revenue streams. During 2015/16 the councils transformation programme has continued to deliver savings through increasing joint working with Cherwell District Council. Since we began joint working CDC and SNC have saved over £3million from their annual budgets. As well as the senior management team all back office services are now shared and we have delivered savings through joint procurement of ICT (for example an upgraded finance system) and also in areas such as waste collection. SNC are currently implementing a shared customer service team which will ensure we have more capacity to answer calls and provide a wider range of services to customer in a 'one stop shop style' which should greatly improve customer service. In 2016/17 we will also establish a joint revenues and benefits service with Cherwell. This will ensure that benefits work is undertaken locally and in predicted to save in excess of £250k once the service has been established. Whilst delivering savings thorough joint working during the last year we have also invested in some key services, specifically economic development, which aims to ensure business locate and grow within the district which benefits the local economy, provides local jobs and also brings business rates to the area. Our business rate growth for last year was £780k from.

Community Funding (Grants) SNC have continued to run a generous grants programme.

For the past number of years £63,000 has been allocated from general funds and £175,000 from capital funds. New Homes Bonus 10% is set aside for Voluntary and Charity Groups and 30% for the Parishes that have taken the housing Growth. New Homes Bonus is now in its sixth year and some parishes have built up sizable sums and others have seen community benefit. SNC have been

able to give INCREASED funding to the South Northants Volunteer Bureaux and give them funding until 2019 of over £300,000. Citizen Advice too have had increased funding over multi year deals again until 2019.

Looking Ahead – Devolution In February I caused quite a stir when I announced that I was investigating a concept to build on the successful relationship with Cherwell and see if it was possible to have a cross boundary unitary authority. This was based on an idea from an Oxfordshire devolution deal. Once I made the proposal others in Northamptonshire, the districts and boroughs and the County Council all followed the lead and decided to look at local government reform. At present there are studies ongoing in Oxfordshire and discussions about scope in Northamptonshire. The government have desires to give local authorities and local communities more power but they also want to have a single tier local government. Whether or not anything will come from this it is too early to tell as we need support from the government, the others and all may end up in the category marked “too difficult”. Time will tell and in the mean time feel free to contribute to the debate.

Ian A McCord

Conservative Councillor for Cosgrove and Grafton Ward

Leader South Northamptonshire Council

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9. Report from County Councillor Allen Walker Deanshanger Ward including Old Stratford
What a year!!!! Who would have thought we would be talking and moving to a complete new structure at NCC? (Next Generation Working) What does this mean to you the residents of the above Parishes of my Ward. **Well probably very little to you in real terms.** But to us Councillors a smarter, better, more financially sound County Council. The Structure as I have explained simply over the year is to split the major elements into Trading Companies. So we will have Environment & Transport doing as it does now with our Partner KIAWSP. There will be a New Mutual Company for Wellbeing and its partners in the NHS, a new Community Interest Company for Adult Services/Social Services, as well as a new Mutual Trust for Children & Young People, complementing our own Trading Company LGSS. All having their own Directors and workforce. These will still be controlled by the CXO and his team and us Politicians known as NCC Group, we will have a 51% controlling stake in each element. Which will be governed by Cabinet and Full Council decisions still. (There, easy peas`y). At NCC numerous activities that I have been involved in are still taking place. The first being, we have improved too, **Good from Inadequate**, for our **“Looked after Children”** I am pleased to say that this has been done by a total revamp of the dep’t and a new director. Albeit the cost has been horrendous (Extra £10M – £15M). Our Academy school for Social Workers is also paying dividends with nearly 100 new people being adequately trained to meet this demanding job. This has been established as an exemplar for the Council. We have taken nearly £200M from our base budget in the last 5 years and planning to take another £130M+ over the next 4 years. **We have had some concessions from Government. We can now use a four-year plan (as opposed to balancing the books yearly)** £65M, £30M £17M, £18M
The cost of running our services would double in the next 4 years if we did not change. It will mean closer working with the 6 Districts & Northampton Borough. This also brings to the fore the Unitary Debate.... **SNC are already paying for a feasibility study to go to a Combined Authority with Cherwell in OXON. Whereby the rest of Northamptonshire Districts/Borough are talking unitary.** As your County Councillor I have kept out of the debate at present until more concrete factual evidence one way or other is given. We at NCC are continuing towards a Tri County Alliance with Oxford & Buckinghamshire to establish Strategic links in the Heartland of England. Project Angel is progressing at a pace, we will see our staff move into a modern purpose built building in Northampton by March 2017. We have done this by closing & selling 12 buildings, effectively making the £54M to pay for this. As I have said before “What you see is what you get”

with me. Hopefully I have lived up to your expectations as your County Councillor of 19 years. Every year seems to get harder financially.

My activities locally as your County Councillor have involved;

90 Bus services; Traffic management along the A508 and I have had successful separate meetings with Highways Officers, regarding future traffic management on the A5, A422 A508 and the over capacity of the Roundabout at Old Stratford to enshrine in the NCC Highways Strategy approved by Cabinet, for future action.

My County work activities for parishioners is higher than ever (Due to the changes being made at NCC) but I still maintain a 24hr turn around on initial call contact.

I would again thank your Clerk & you Councillors. Not forgetting you residents for your forbearance whilst working and communicating with me in dealing with matters on your behalf.

I am still contactable on:

Telephone 01908 – 260302

E – Mail awalker@northamptonshire.gov.uk or allenwalker14@outlook.com

10. Any Other Business

None

With no other business the meeting closed at 7.35pm