

# Cosgrove Parish Council

## MINUTES OF COSGROVE ANNUAL OPEN MEETING

Held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at the Village Hall, Bridge Road commencing at 7.00pm

**Present:** Cllrs Mrs H Harbottle (in the chair), Mr A Bracey, Mrs F Childs, Mr M Draddy, Mr P Roberts, Mr D Smith, Mr W Smith, Mr C Stokes & Mrs L Welton  
Also present were Mr D Everett (Clerk), 2 members of the public Helen Howard (NCC Highways) And PCSO Tara Cooksammy

### 1. Apologies

Cllr Mr A Walker (NCC) @ 1332 due to family problem > requested copy of intended report  
Cllr McCord (SNC) apologies (report sent for attachment to minutes following day)

### 2. Minutes of the 2017 Annual Open Meeting (previously displayed n/b and website)

Previously circulated and signed as a correct record at the May 2017 meeting

### 3. Matter Arising

No matters arising

### 4. Petitioners or Questions from Electors (required in writing by 12 noon 4<sup>th</sup> May 2018)

None

### 5. Presentation of Accounts

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

- |     |  |                    |
|-----|--|--------------------|
| (a) | <b>To receive Audited Accounts 2016 / 2017</b> | } No comments      |
| (b) | <b>Accounts for Audit 2017 / 2018</b>          | } No comments      |
| (c) | <b>Budget Proposals 2018 / 2019</b>            | } No comments made |

\* Accounts adopted - No Qs

### 6. Chairman's Report

This year has seen a change of Chair and Vice Chair, and with that, a revamped agenda, the introduction of a decision sheet, more opportunity for councillors to contribute at meetings and we have welcomed Polly, who now acts as our meeting reporter for The Old Mail.

I would like to thank you all for all your hard work and support, in particular Wayne, Derek and also Allen and Ian. My thanks go to the members of the public who attend our monthly meetings or who take the trouble to contact us or catch up with us when we are out and about in the village.

Our new street lighting is up and running and seems to have been well received.

We have installed a new public notice board and two additional dog waste bins. We have begun to develop the green space on the crossroads by the village sign. We now have a Christmas tree and have plans for a bench. Parking on the verge, however remains a problem.

We have had some success with planning issues, although the Caravan Park and its outsized deliveries continue to cause us major concerns.

We have pressured (and will not stop pressurising) to make safety improvements to the Yardley Road/Castlethorpe junction and we maintain our vigil over Cosgrove Hall and express our desire for it to be restored, following the dreadful fire which engulfed it.

We remain proactive in our approach towards the Canal Society to ensure that the so called "improvements" are in the best interests of the environment and the villagers alike.

We gear ourselves up for the changes which will affect our villagers due to the cuts by NCC, in particular the bus and library services.

Throughout the year, councillors play their unsung part by salt spreading, litter picking, clearing, weed killing, repairing, maintaining, pink spraying, communicating, walking our patch etc etc. Once again, I would like to thank you for all that you do and look forward to a positive year and all that it has to throw at us.

#### **7. Report by Northamptonshire Highways**

Helen Howard spoke on NCCs current position especially road maintenance; Yardley Road / Castlethorpe junction review (discussed at length) was on 'radar' BUT - would request Steve Barber for an update on the proposed scheme and proposed costing.

*Cllr Bracey advised that 280 new dwellings at Castlethorpe and 150 at Hanslope MKC had been approved without any road infrastructure? (Noted)*

#### **8. Report by Northamptonshire Police**

PCSO Cooksammy spoke on low level of crime in the area and on targeted crimes elsewhere Footway parking and Anti Social Behaviour issues discussed

(With no crime figures specific for Cosgrove from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 produced, the clerk had checked the Crime Logs for Cosgrove with the following results)

<b>Burglary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Criminal Damage</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Drugs</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Sexual Offences</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>M/V Crime</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Theft</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Other offences</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total Serious Crimes</b>	<b>28</b>

*(Note: Violence (no charges)/ ASBos (no arrests) = 31 (mostly during season when CP is open)*

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

**E-mail: [SCT-SouthNorthantsTowcester@northants.police.uk](mailto:SCT-SouthNorthantsTowcester@northants.police.uk)**

**Crime Stoppers (anonymous and free) 0800 555 111**

#### **9. Report from District Councillor Ian A McCord (précis report for Cosgrove)**

**South Northants District** continues to be ranked as one of the best places to live in the country.

The Halifax survey 2017 rated SNC area as 13<sup>th</sup>. Unemployment is one of the lowest in the country although SNC runs a job club to help anyone get back into work. The waste and recycling record is one of which we remain proud having achieved 61% recycling rate. This put SNC in 8th position in the country.

**Funding** continues to be reduced from central government, we are getting less money from grant but with growing housing numbers, growing business rates we continue to balance the books. SNC continue to be one of the best at collecting council tax with 99% of all tax collected. The national average is 98% and SNC is ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the whole of the Country on collection rate Unlike many Councils SNC uses some of the **New Homes Bonus** it receives from new developments to invest in the local community. Local organisations can bid for grants to help them achieve their objectives.

The SNC part of the **Council Tax bill** was raised by 3% which is £5.41 a year for a Band D property, making total now £185.78 per year. The increase is in line with inflation. SNC only get to keep 11% of the total bill. Northants County take the biggest share at 73%, PCC 13% and the parishes about 3%. The SNC proportion of the Council Tax will increase by approx 10p per week increase. In addition, individual Parish Precepts will be levied and charged for.

A replacement **Joint Chief Executive, Yvonne Rees**, has been recruited and was confirmed by Council on 23 March 2017. After working her notice from her previous employers of Surrey County Council and Mole Valley District Council, Yvonne started with SNC/CDC in July. We have had some considerable achievements in the year finally finishing off the joint working agenda with Cherwell with the joint services in Housing and Development Management. This now means that all our services are shared with Cherwell, We are truly, one on the inside and two on the outside. The Chief Executive's at the request of the Leaders commenced on a restructuring of the senior management team. This will create additional senior level capacity to deliver on the many programs that are running across the two councils. This has put a significant focus on developing the income streams to the council and identifying commercial opportunities as each director will have this responsibility to deliver in each of these areas. Already agreed is the environmental services scheme for delivering a service to support our districts food businesses, In due course following a pilot scheme we will be able to evaluate and if successful develop this further.

The preparation of the **Local Plan Part 2** has been an ongoing project. This will replace the existing policy that was adopted by SNC in 1997. During the summer SNC had a 10 week public consultation period which completed on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017. 1200 issues were raised from 400 submissions which have been considered. In some cases adjustments and changes have been made. The subsequent Revision is currently being drafted and will be placed in the public sector for a 6 week consultation period in late spring 2018. In the meantime every item raised from individuals and developers is being placed on the website together with an accompanying explanation.

When the 6 week Consultation period referred to above has been completed, the final review will be submitted to the Inspectorate. The process of inspection could take in the region of 20 weeks, if no issues are raised the Local Plan Part 2 could become statute in the Autumn of 2018.

National Planning Policy demands that every council has a land bank so that development can take place in that area. The core strategy sets out the rate at which the council needs to deliver, which for SNC means we need to have 1680 available planning permissions granted on sites that are likely and able to be developed within 5 years. National Planning Policy also states that where there is not a 5 year land supply then there should be a presumption in favour of the development irrespective of village confines and other planning tools that the council can rely on. Throughout the year SNC maintained a full land bank and SNC can demonstrate a bank of almost double the 1680 minimum at 3296. Our land supply is 10.2 years.

Throughout the year the council has updated or introduced some new **policies and strategies including:-**

Tenancy Strategy - Housing and Homelessness Strategy - Joint Animal Licensing Policy  
Corporate Fraud Policy - Joint Scrap Metal Licensing Policy - Fleet and Vehicle Replacement Strategy - Consultation and Engagement Strategy - ICT Strategy - Design Code for building standards - Parking Standards for new developments & taxis and private hire cars licensing

The Local Government Association run a program of **Corporate Peer Reviews** where the aim is to get others from within local government to review what we are doing and pass comment. It is an improvement initiative where best practice can be adopted widely.

In November SNC and Cherwell had a Peer Review. The team interviewed a range of people who have contact with the council, parish and town councils, PCC, leaders of other councils in the area, health sector, voluntary sector, business representatives, members of parliament, charities etc to get a flavour of what we do well and where we can improve. After a week of evidence gathering they concluded that SNC and Cherwell were well run and in a relatively strong position.

The LGA Peer review has supported the Councils aim to be able to speed up the decision making on capital financial investments. In the changing world of low investment returns and reducing Government financial support it is imperative SNC has a fit for purpose financial policy framework to make decisions more quickly and efficiently to be able to respond to commercial investment deals. Other recommendations were made to look at the corporate governance and try to speed up and slick up decision making at the councils.

**Conservation and Heritage** is everything that has happened in the past which influences and inspires what we are today and where we are going in the future-as a District, as local communities, as organisations, as families and as individuals. An appreciation of our heritage helps us to learn the lessons from the past, creates a sense of continuity and progression and helps to shape our identity and future. South Northants contains some of the country's most quintessentially English landscapes stretching as it does from the northern Cotswolds to the gentle rolling hills in middle England. These landscapes are interspersed with attractive, largely unspoilt villages of medieval or earlier origin, the Roman town of Towcester, the market town of Brackley, and important examples of designed landscapes at a number of major landed estates. The Conservation Strategy is a fundamental step to ensuring that this happens. It sets out the Council's responsibilities and To quote a few statistics; the district has 1,831 Listed Buildings. The District contains 96 villages and two market towns. Both towns and 51 of the 96 villages have historic areas designated as conservation areas, recognising their special architectural and historic interest, aspirations for the historic environment within the district, the resources that are available to it and a programme for how it intends to undertake this task over the next five years.

**Help for Residents with 'Home Safe'** The vulnerable, disabled and elderly are being offered free home repairs following a partnership between South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) and Care & Repair (Northamptonshire) Ltd. The scheme, entitled 'Home Safe', will offer support with a range of small home improvements such as small repairs, home security and energy efficiency measures, gas safety checks, fitting smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, trip reduction measures, the installation of grab and stair rails and assistance with electrics, plumbing and carpentry. For more information on the scheme visit the [Care & Repair](#) website or email [office@careandrepairnorthamptonshire.org.uk](mailto:office@careandrepairnorthamptonshire.org.uk) or call 01604 782250.

#### **Conservative Councillor for Cosgrove and Grafton Ward**

##### **Leader South Northamptonshire Council**

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#### **10. Report from County Councillor**

Late apologies due to family matters > no reports

**Allen Walker**

**Northamptonshire County Councillor – Deanshanger Ward**

Telephone 01908 – 260302

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#### **11. Any Other Business**

None

With no other business the meeting closed at 7.55pm