

THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF NECTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 10th APRIL 2014

Present Councillor Woodward – Chairman Necton Parish Council, Jeanette Webb Acting – Parish Clerk.

Also present Mr M Kiddle-Morris, Norfolk County Councillor for Necton. Mr N Wilkin – Breckland District Councillor for Necton and 2 members of the public.

Welcome by Chairman. Councillor Woodward welcomed the public to the meeting and thanked both Mr Kiddle-Morris and Mr Wilkin for attending the meeting.

Apologies. Councillor Sisto and Councillor Axham

Minutes of The Annual Parish Meeting of 11th April 2013. They were signed by Councillor Woodward as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the Minutes. None

Chairman's Annual Report The last year has been very stressful for everyone on the Council. It is with regret that we have lost the Chairman, Chris Sandell, Roy Campbell and Carol Porter. But we have welcomed a new Councillor, Louise Willis.

We now have the Necton Allotment Associate and Community Garden Project, which are slowly coming together. They should have a water supply shortly.

We now have 30 LED street lights, in Tuns/Hale Road, Chantry Lane, and 2 in School Road.

The Bus shelters on the A47 are still ongoing problems and we are waiting for a reply from NCC re the finance.

42 Welcome Packs have been delivered, our thanks go to Hilary Bewes who organised these.

In closing I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and support over the last year.

Parish Clerk's Report The Precept Meeting for Financial year 2013/14 was held on October 2012 and the precept was set at £24,965. The Parish Council are fully aware of the harsh economic times for a large part of the villagers who are on fixed incomes. The Parish Council will therefore ensure strict financial and monetary controls are effected at all times and that all expenditure is within budgetary systems and limits. During the year ending 31st March 2014 the Parish Council Expenditure for the year totalled approximately £45,000 from a total income of £34,300. The Parish Council received grants totalling £5659 towards the cost of the replacement of the playing field fence. This enabled the whole project to be funded by grants and at no cost to the Parish Council. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Parish Councillors for the support they have given me over the past year.

Norfolk County Councillor's Report Norfolk County Councillors Report. Cllr Kiddle-Morris reported that the election of Councillors for a new 4 year term took place in May 2013, since then there has been one by election (in Thetford) where the UKIP Councillor had resigned; the Division was won by the Labour candidate. On the 28th February a Labour Councillor resigned from the Labour group and is to remain as an independent. The current state of the parties at County Hall is now as follows:-

Conservative	40	Labour	14
Green Party	4	Lib/Dem	10
Independent	2	UKIP	14

At the Council meeting immediately after the May election it was proposed that the Council investigate the possibility of moving from the strong leader and cabinet system of governance to a committee system. There are various models that can be adopted under the committee system and this has been discussed at length by the parties. An Extraordinary Council meeting will be held on the 28th April to debate the way forward.

The grant that central government distributes annually to all Councils has been reduced over the last 3 years and will be reduced further in future years; the previous administration made savings of £135m but there are still more savings required over the next 3 years and there amount to £189m. Government funding cuts of £91m and rising demand for vital services account for the shortfall. Despite this the Council agreed on 17th February to freeze Council Tax for this year and to restore £7.1m of proposed cuts to the budget as a result of the "Putting People First" consultation which ended on the 12th December 2013. (£3.1m to consolidate the Safeguarding Children programme; £1m to delay changes to post 16 transport for a year; £3m to restore the well-being element of adult social care personal budgets).

Norfolk has not suffered as much from the extremely wet January and February as other parts of the country and the very low temperatures experienced over the last 4 years have not been evident. Winter highway maintenance (ie gritting) has not been necessary to the same level as in previous years. Potholes have of course appeared as usual but not in the same quantity and consequently have been temporarily filled in short order. The highways maintenance budget was cut by £1m for next year 2014/2015. However, the government has recently allocated the County Council over £3m to address maintenance problems on our roads.

The "Better Broadband for Norfolk" contract managed by BT and funded by the County Council and central government will enable the majority of Norfolk homes and businesses to enjoy better broadband speeds by installing "fibre to box" and other technologies. The Swaffham exchange which serves Necton is currently labelled as a "future exchange" and installation of a fibre system is due to take place this year. The actual completion date is not known at present but the latest information can be found on the Better Broadband for Norfolk website and following links to the Ofcom and BT Openreach websites.

At an Extraordinary meeting of the County Council held on Monday 7th April the decision was taken to terminate the contract with Cory Wheelabrator for the building the energy from waste plant near Kings Lynn. The termination costs will amount to £30m+ and of this around £12m will have to be found by additional efficiencies and cuts to services this year.

Breckland Councillor's Report

I believe that as District Councilor, planning has been more prominent than ever lately.

We are currently nearing the completion of Hopkins Home development in Mill Street, which has delivered a mix of house types at the same time as achieving an adequate supply of affordable housing. We are experiencing percentages on some developments around the district of only 10% and in many cases nil. The finished development is well presented and having worked with Hopkins homes before, they have yet again achieved homes that the village could use as a guideline for future construction.

The biggest thing to happen in the area for many a day is the wind turbine substation which although many say was originally planned for Dunham as I keep saying this is still North Necton as this is still in the parish, but it is my belief that the new location will be far more acceptable in the long run following plantation schemes within the project. Monies promised from the new owners Statoil is very attractive but we must ensure that we have projects in mind to spend this wisely.

The Garden Centre has been passed with a new layout which is far better than the cramped design previously put forward, it is a great shame to lose what was at one time a very successful business but changing economic climates and the supermarkets wanting every other penny from our pockets constraints any business.

The Café site has many complications of its own and I feel it will be a long time before we see anything on there and we should be prepared to continue to live with the current eyesore.

The new National Planning Policy Framework will see in many areas a relaxation of village boundaries and construction on agricultural and green spaces, going forward I will hopefully be in a position following next years elections to fight any ideas of expansion to our village as I feel we are at capacity now. Being one of Brecklands so called service centers, this always seems to be a poisoned chalice as all we receive is yet more housing. I am also experiencing throughout the district decisions made by planning inspectors going totally against all of our local planning policies leaving nothing safe.

Councillor Nigel Wilkin, Necton Ward Representative, Breckland Council

Public Discussion Time. Was the frustration of limited broadband speeds particularly in Chapel Road, Ivy Todd and Ketts Hill. They currently only receive ½ meg and obviously this is frustrating for businesses and households alike.

There being no further business the **meeting closed** at 8.08pm.

Approved on _____

Signed by _____

Name _____