

## WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in the Village Hall, Weston commencing at 10.30 a.m.

#### **Present:**

Councillors: D. Chase, G. Francis, P. Laughton, M. Lowney, P. Nice, T. Webster  
District Councillor: S. Michael  
Clerk: S. Akerman

Members of the Public: 14

#### **170501 Introduction and welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

#### **170502 To accept the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2016**

The minutes were accepted as a true and correct record and duly signed by the Chair.  
Proposed by Cllr. Laughton, seconded by Cllr. Nice.

#### **170503 To discuss any matters arising from the minutes**

None raised

#### **170504 To receive a report from District Councillor Sylvia Michael**

Cllr. Michael thanked the meeting for the opportunity to provide an update on Newark & Sherwood District Council from the last year:

- The new council offices are approx. two months away from being completed and the move from Kelham Hall taking place
- Plans for 335 new home to be built over the next 5 years in association with Newark & Sherwood Homes. The Council is supporting the Rural Housing Scheme aimed at young people starting out in the housing ladder or for people looking to downsize.
- The Council now has a dedicated officer working two days/week to deal with the long term empty properties in the district with the aim of getting them back into use. There is currently 4,000 people on the housing waiting list.
- A new supported housing facility of 60 units is to be built on Bowbridge Road in Newark, to include 40 extra care apartments following funding from central government.
- N&SDC planning department are seeing a significantly lower number of planning applications for wind turbines and solar farms due to the government's reduction of tariffs.
- Train services have improved again over the last year, with an increase in the number of trains running on Sundays.

#### **170505 Guest Speakers**

##### **Neighbourhood Policing - PCSO Keith Crowhurst**

PCSO Crowhurst was introduced and advised the meeting that he covers an area that stretches from Weston to Oxtun and Gunthorpe which equates to approx. 30 villages. He also attends the bi-monthly Safer Neighbourhood Group meetings along with Cllr. Michael and Cllr. Laughton.

Over the last six months there have been very few incidents reported in Weston, with most reports being of abandoned cars or diesel stolen from lorries parked at the side of the A1. Other work includes speed and vehicle checks.

There are approx. 30-40% fewer officers today hence resources are targeted at areas where reported incidents are higher. The success rate for resolving crime is much higher for 'real time' reports – it is very important to report anything suspicious at the time and

not days later. The Police will never see any contact to report suspicious behaviour as a waste of time. Numbers to call: 101 – connects to the district control room and 999 – for emergencies, i.e. if people or property are at threat, however if you are unsure what number to call always dial 999.

Mrs Saddington asked about enforcing speed limits. PCSO Crowhurst advised that the mobile speed detector vans are usually located in known black spots with a large number of accidents or life altering collisions. If anyone knows of specific and repeated speed offenders, then report this and action will be taken.

Cllr. Francis asked about dashcam footage. PCSO Crowhurst advised it is not generally admissible as it does not record the passing speed. Again if a regular offender is known, then he is happier to review footage.

Mr Sherville asked whether average speed cameras could not be placed at Carlton and Tuxford to reduce speed. PCSO Crowhurst advised that these cameras cost £400,000 are generally used in areas that would save lives. Incidents of excessive speed on the Great North Road are very few. Cllr. Chase mentioned the speed survey that was carried out last year which showed very few recordings of excessive speed.

### **All Saints Church and Weston Parochial Church Council – Mr Simon Meadows**

Mr Meadows introduced himself to the meeting as the Secretary to All saints Parochial Church Council and thanked the meeting for the opportunity to talk about the church. There are regular services held at Weston every Sunday: Holy Communion at 8.30am (two per month), 1 Morning Prayer at 9.30am and 1 Informal Service at 9.30am which is run by the congregation.

Congregation numbers are steady but down on previous years due to people leaving the village or passing away. A mixture of weddings, christenings and unfortunately a higher number of funerals have been held over the last twelve months.

The year's events included:

- A celebration of the Queen's Jubilee with a distribution of books
- The Harvest Supper was a great success with a full roast dinner and deserts and is planned again for this year
- Harvest Festival service was well supported although with lower numbers than previously. All fresh and tinned produce was donated to Newark Emaus Trust
- The Christmas Tree Festival was a huge success with more trees this year. It was a real delight to see them decorate the church and encouraged people to attend the Carol and Christmas Eve services in higher numbers than previously.
- Between September and December an Alpha course saw on average 20 people attending engaging meetings with videos etc. Plans to hold another course this year are to be discussed.
- Prayer Meetings are held every Monday at 7.30pm. There are plans to put a letterbox on the church pathway for prayer requests.
- A study group meets on Wednesdays at Mrs Fendly's house. Themes have been the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. Anyone is welcome to attend.
- Members of the congregation have visited villages known to be in need and the church continues to support the food bank.

Challenges for the church:

- Falling financial support – the church is only meeting 50% of its contribution to the diocese due to falling congregation numbers and reduced giving. Costs are increasing and revenue is well below expenditure.
- The lead work is giving way in some of the stained glass windows
- Heating the church is an ongoing struggle
- Keeping the churchyard tidy – the grass is cut regularly but there is always other work to be done. Volunteers are always welcome

- The supports for the bells are crumbling and may give problems in the tower in the future
- Burial ground - the church is working with the parish council to resolve the purchase

Mr Meadows closed with thanks to the parish council for its support and to Cllr. Lowney for placing details and event advertising on the village website and Facebook page.

### **Weston Village Hall – Mr Colin Laughton**

The village hall is a registered charity. The hall was funded as a school in 1736 and ran until it closed in 1964. The building was bought for £250 in 1970.

The hall is run by a very small group of volunteers. Mr Laughton thanked Catherine Saddington for her work at the hall.

All events are advertised around the village, on the website and Facebook page and in *Unity* and provide funds for general equipment for the hall. Weekly events include keep fit, bingo, craft night and Louise Clarksons Dance School which attracts some 150 children. An average of 19 events are held monthly events including the coffee mornings and WI meetings.

The November coffee morning was held in support of the Fernwood Community Unit and raised over £500. A thank you was given to the Craft Club who raise funds selling Christmas and Easter crafts. In addition in the last twelve months there were two Pie and Pea Quiz Nights each year, an Afternoon Tea, schedule for August this year, Christmas Party and a street party on June 12<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the Queen's Birthday. A barn dance at Ladywood Farm attracted around people and this year's event will be on 8<sup>th</sup> July. A jumble sale held recently raised over £100 – thanks to Sue Pennant and her mother for their work. Other events include children's parties, funeral catering and Mr Jim Sherville's Burns Night. Plans for this year include first aid training.

The main goal for 2016/17 was to replace the heating in the hall, however this was overtaken by the need to replace the kitchen floor. A new floor has been laid and cupboards installed. Other challenges to be considered include replacing the heating system, repair of damaged fencing, decorating, drainage issues and renovation of the toilet block. .

Mr Laughton closed thanking everyone who gives their time and supports the hall adding that volunteers are always welcome.

Mr Sherville asked why grants were not applied for as other villages in the area had received funds for work on village halls. Mr Laughton advised that the committee only has 5 people on it and whilst the availability of grants is looked at regularly, time constraints make it difficult to apply within the set parameters.

### **Weston Women's Institute – Mrs Pauline Sherville**

Mrs Sherville is Secretary to Weston WI and provided information on the group's activities and plan for the year.

Mr Sherville commented that the Weston group is small and has seen numbers drop in the last year which could result in the group folding if they reduced much more. He also mentioned a monthly lunch club run by Mrs Sherville which anyone is welcome to join. Details will be provided to the village hall and Cllr. Lowney to advertise.

### **170506 To receive the Annual Report of the Parish Council from the Chairman**

The past year has been another busy year. One of the first actions of the Council was to co-opt Mr Glyn Francis to fill the vacancy for parish councillor.

We have as usual been highlighting the poor state of our roads and footpaths to the County Council through our County Councillor Bruce Laughton. As a result of that, Bruce arranged for the Chief Executive to come to Westin and walk the length of Main Street to view the road condition. He is now at least aware just how bad the road is, but unfortunately I do not expect it to be resurfaced in the near future.

We have been trying to get a speed reduction to 50mph on the Great North Road and the County Council and Highways are looking into a suitable scheme.

One subject that has taken a lot of consideration has been the parish burial ground. The Council has decided to sell the area to the PCC so that the whole of the churchyard could remain open and maintained by the PCC. The matter is currently in the hands of solicitors.

We have decided to have a new housing needs survey to try to establish whether there is a need for affordable housing in the parish. The survey forms are going out now and I would encourage everyone to complete the survey so we can help to provide affordable local housing is required.

I would like to thank our County Councillor Bruce Laughton and our District Councillor Sylva Michael for all their time and help over the past year.

I would also like to thank our Clerk Sandra Akerman for all her time and expertise in dealing with council business so efficiently.

Thank you

#### **170507 To receive information on the Affordable Housing Needs Survey**

The Clerk reiterated the Chair's comment that survey forms have been circulated and should be completed and returned by 31<sup>st</sup> May. A report from Midlands Rural Housing on the results of the survey is scheduled to be given at the council meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> July. The Clerk also advised the meeting that the survey was run in conjunction with Midlands Rural Housing and N&SDC with no costs incurred by the parish council other than councillors time distributing the survey forms.

Mr Saddington asked if land was available. Cllr, Chase responded stating that land would need to be identified if the scheme progressed.

Mrs Saddington asked that is the survey did not have a clear response, what were the possibilities of building on own land and would the council support such an application. Cllr. Michael advised that the council could only address applications on a case by case basis and any decision would be made by N&SDC. Cllr. Michael went on to say that he majority of small villages, Weston included, are deemed unsustainable for new development which is where the affordable housing scheme could allow housing in small numbers to be built. The parish council sets the parameters for who would be eligible under the scheme. Such a scheme can be seen as providing a lifeline to small villages.

Mr Sherville asked how a housing estate could be built in such a village. Cllr. Chase advised if a requirement was identified only a small number, e.g. 4 houses, would be considered once land was identified. If the scheme is to progress, the parish council advertises for land which is purchased at approx. £10,000/plot.

Cllr. Lowney added it is important at this point to understand what demand for affordable housing there is, if any.

#### **170508 Open Forum to receive comments and questions from the public**

Mr Saddington asked about concrete blocks placed at the side of Main Street to stop parking on the verge – two people have fallen over them. Cllr. Laughton advised this had been reported to Highways and she would follow up.

A member of the public asked about cutting grass verges. Cllr. Laughton advised Highways do cut the verges, however residents often do this themselves.

Mr Sherville asked if the owner of the bungalow on Main Street could be requested to tidy up its exterior. Cllr. Michael and Cllr. Chase advised as there were no safety concerns the council could not get involved.

**170509 To receive a vote of thanks and close**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and especially the guest speakers for giving their time. He stated he felt moving the meeting to a Saturday had been a success.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 11.40am.

These minutes were approved as a true and correct recorded and signed by the Chair on Saturday 19th May 2018. Minute ref. 332-336. Minutes recorded by the Clerk to Weston Parish Council