

**Minutes of Yardley Gobion Annual Parish Assembly  
Held on Friday 20th May 2005 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllrs: C Crisp (Chair), Mrs M Benge, R Westlake, Mrs S Hill, L Potter, C King.  
P C Goddard, Dist Cllr Wilson, County Cllr Walker.  
Residents: Mrs E Rogers, Mr J Rogers, Mr T Richards,  
Mrs S Kirkbright & Mr M Kirkbright.

**Apologies:** Cllrs Ms L Stephenson & C Turl.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the 2004 Annual Parish Assembly were signed as a correct record.

Cllr Crisp reminded all present that this was not a Parish Council meeting but a Parish meeting where various bodies are invited to give annual reports and questions can be put to them and local Councillors.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2004-2005**

**COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of the Parish Council reached a low point by May 2004, when we had only SIX members. However, thanks to the efforts of the remaining members of the Council, between June and September of 2004, FOUR civic-minded residents volunteered to join us, bringing the membership to TEN, which is only one short of the ELEVEN to which we are entitled.

So, if anyone is interested in what policies are being proposed that will affect our Parish, and would like to take part in the consultation processes that we are involved in with Central and Local Government, there is still ONE place for you on the Parish Council.

Anyone interested in finding out more about what's involved, please have a talk with the Clerk or any councillor at the end of this meeting.

**COUNCIL'S "HOUSEKEEPING" ROLE**

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

The PC scrutinised 23 applications this year, and made "Observations" on 20 of them. Apart from the normal extensions to houses, the most notable were:

The relocation of the Post Office counter and sorting facility within the village. This will be required whenever the current premises on High Street closes. We are still in communication with Post Office Limited

regarding the our attempt to retain the Post Office facilities within the village, and we have also requested the support of our MP Tim Boswell.

Unapproved waste-disposal sites. Councillors have noticed, and reported to Northamptonshire County Council, several instances where commercial waste is being stored on farmland sites that do not have the relevant approval. This may be in response to the higher charges that central government has introduced for disposing of commercial waste at authorised landfill sites. The most noticeable of these unapproved sites, is the one at the junction of Moorend Road and the A5. We are currently awaiting the outcome of legal actions taken by NCC for the halting of further waste disposal and the clearance of the existing waste.

There is also a separate action being pursued by South Northants District Council, for the re-instatement of a section of hedgerow on the same site.

Central government plans for the development of Milton Keynes and the South Midlands. These are proceeding, and the West Northamptonshire Urban Development Corporation has now been created to implement the plans. During the past year, the Parish Council along with many other bodies, has responded to consultation documents regarding the currently published plans, and the UDC itself.

As I said in my report last year, the UDC **will** have an effect on future planning applications, and to prove the point, we have just received another consultation document, requesting our views on the way that planning responsibilities should be split between the UDC and Local Government.

### **HIGHWAYS**

The most significant event during the past year, as with the year before, was the resurfacing of village roads. This time it was the turn of the remainder of the “new estate” roads at the Water Tower end of the village, which were resurfaced during June. Although the resurfacing itself was carried out very efficiently, the same cannot be said about the replacement of all the white road-markings, some of which have still not been done.

Unfortunately, this has become another item on the Parish Clerk’s growing list of regular reminders to NCC’s Highways department, regarding outstanding work.

### **VILLAGE DIRECTORY**

This is now the 3rd year for the Village Directory, and the Council would appreciate feedback from residents, if there are any changes

that they would like to see made to either the content or the way it is presented; or if they just want to say how wonderful it is!

### **MOWING**

We are again doing the mowing on an agency basis for the County Council. As you may have noticed from the effects in you own gardens, the growing season appears to be lengthening. We have therefore introduced more flexibility into our mowing contract, to allow for variations in the frequency and total number of grass-cuts required.

### **ALLOTMENTS**

It would appear that the idea of growing your own food appears to be getting more popular, as we are now in the happy position of having no vacant allotments plots.

### **PLAYING-FIELDS**

Following work by Councillor Bates (one of the years new intake), a group of villagers have formed a group called KidZone, to create and implement a plan for improving the children's play areas within the village. Although the Parish Council has been setting aside funds for play-area improvements, a separate charitable group, such as KidZone, will be able to augment this money by applying for additional funding that is not available to the Parish Council.

### **UNADOPTED SEWERS**

Discussion of this long-running problem had to be curtailed for some time during the year, as we were advised that the subject was of prejudicial interest to 9 out of the 10 Councillors. Following a request for clarification, we were subsequently advised that each of the 9 Councillors could be granted a dispensation by the SNC Standards Committee, and these dispensations were subsequently obtained. The final outcome of the discussions, following informed advice that the Parish Council had sought, was that the Council could not have any financial involvement with unadopted sewers, as it did not own them. It was agreed that information could be provided to affected residents, and therefore the Council has gathered relevant information into a document, and will arrange for a copy to be delivered to each household that is served by unadopted sewers.

A limited number of copies of the document are available from the Clerk tonight.

### **LITTER & ANTI-SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Litter is a perennial problem within the parish and I would again ask all residents to ensure that they, and any children that they are responsible for, take their litter home or place it in the appropriate bins.

I would again also ask all residents to consider taking responsibility for keeping the pavement and road in front of their home clear of litter, irrespective of who has dropped it. This action does not take much effort, but it does discourage further littering and makes for a more pleasant environment for us all.

During the past year we have seen a welcome reduction in vandalism to Council property, although there has been some minor damage to equipment in the play areas on the School Lane and Coffee Pot fields. The Council asks that residents report any such incidents to the police, to ensure that they are fully aware of what is happening in the village, and can hopefully track down the culprits.

As a footnote to the above, the most costly acts of vandalism were those involving damage to the Coffee Pot field itself. However thanks to the prompt action of Councillor Bates, the culprit - a Mr Mole, of no fixed address - is currently being dealt with.

There are still some irresponsible dog owners who are not clearing up after their dogs, even on the School Lane field where there are two dog bins. If residents see any such incidents taking place, please report them to the South Northants Council's Dog Warden.

As I remarked in last year's report, the problem of fly-tipping is not new, and will certainly not decrease in frequency as central government increases the costs for disposing of waste on landfill sites. It is essential that any instances of fly-tipping in our parish are immediately reported to SNC, as the longer the rubbish is in place, the more likely it is that others will add to it.

### **CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**

The Parish Council continues to receive consultation documents from both local and central government sources. Recent ones have dealt with SNC's housing strategy, Northamptonshire's Mineral extraction policy and the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Development Plan. These may sound somewhat forbidding titles, and the way that they are presented are not very user-friendly (for non-experts). However, the issues that they deal with will have an impact on our lives, and we should do all that we can to be involved in the consultation processes.

There are two ways that residents can be involved:

One is to join the Council, attend consultation meetings and help with our responses to documents.

The second is to get involved in producing a Parish Plan. This is something that is done outside of the Parish Council, and funding is available for the actual production of the plan.

The basic idea of a Parish Plan is for residents to provide a clear view to Local Government of the way that they want to see their parish develop (or not), as the case may be. As we have found in responding to previous consultation exercises, it is much better to have time to think about and clearly articulate a view of how residents think their Parish should develop, in advance of any consultation process.

If you are interested in being involved in either of the above options, please talk to the Clerk or any Councillor at the end of this meeting.

## **VILLAGE PROJECTS**

### **WOODVILLE CRESCENT**

Councillors are still investigating what options are open to develop this land for housing, but with the involvement of local government, central government, housing developers, and lawyers, the process is proving to be extremely tortuous.

## **PERSONAL NOTE**

I would like to thank our Clerk for all her hard work during the past year, especially with what seems to be the interminable correspondence involved in trying to get certain local government departments to complete the work that they have promised.

I would also like to thank all Councillors for their support during the past year, and we all look forward to the challenges of the next year, as the Urban Development Corporation beast starts to make its presence felt.

### **Accounts for 2004/05:**

The Accounts which are not audited or approved, and represent a balance of receipts and payments as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005, were reviewed by the Chair at the meeting – highlighting the totals for Parish income and expenditure respectively, and the main items (by value) under each.

### **Report from District Councillor Wilson:**

Cllr Wilson explained that for the last year he had been involved with the budget setting process and gave a brief synopsis of Council Tax, mentioning that this year's (2005/06) increase had been lower due to receipt of a higher grant from Central Government. He advised that the property rebanding process was now taking place, but no one knew how this would affect us. He also mentioned the case of

pensioners refusing the pay last year's full Council Tax and said they were protesting against the system – which was put in place by the Government, not SNC. There were no questions.

### **Report from County Councillor Walker:**

Cllr Walker reported that he had been elected for a third term in office in the May 5<sup>th</sup> election. There was a turnout of 70.8% and his majority increased by some 200 votes. There is now a Conservative administration at NCC for the first time in 12 years, with a working majority of 17.

### **County Council Activities**

**Junk Food Advertising.** Motion to Government re legislation to protect children from bad dietary adverts.

**Improved Democratic Support Services at NCC.** Better assistance with day to day issues for councillors.

**Food Standards Enforcement Plan.** More powers to food enforcement officers throughout the county.

**MKSM Sub Regional Strategy.** Setting up of UDCs county wide. West Northants UDC. The formation of board and area (Daventry, South Northants, Northampton Borough).

**Corporate Parenting for NCC.** Responsibility of every councillor to be a corporate parent for abused and missing children.

**County Youth Forum.** The setting up of one.

**Waste Management Strategy.** Setting up a strategic Board (elected vice-chair). Partnership working with Districts and Boroughs, landfill Licensing issues.

**Architectural Fees in NCC.** Raised questions as why so high in NCC. A508 petition presentation on behalf of Cosgrove and Castlethorpe.

**Home to School Transport.** Question on behalf of Potterspury and Yardley Gobion.

**Demise of the LLL Advisory Boards** of which he was Chair for Daventry and South Northants.

**Area Committees.** The non influential role of this body throughout the county since the Labour Administration found they only worked in Conservative Areas.

**Public Private Sector Partnerships Enquiry.** How not to spend £2M of public money.

**Member of the Education Scrutiny Committee.** Setting up healthy eating in schools strategy, long before the Government and Jamie Oliver jumped on the bandwagon.

**Member of the House Committee.** Overseeing Councillors behaviour at full council and dealing with constitutional affairs.

**Vice Chair of Kingsbrook School governing body.**

### **Activities locally as our County Councillor**

Unauthorised waste tipping and issuing of an Article 42 Notice; road and footpath repairs.

He advised that if grants from central Government next year were the amount expected, then the Council tax increase should not exceed the rate of inflation.

He deals with local individual issues that may arise, with as quick a turnaround as possible to residents, 97% of all cases responded to within 24 hours. 152 enquiries responded to during the past year.

He thanked the Clerk and the Council for their professionalism and indulgence whilst dealing with matters raised for him to act upon.

Cllr Mrs Bengé asked when the village paths would be repaired/resurfaced (in hand) and Cllr Crisp asked why NCC Trading Standards did not publish details on the website of companies that failed to reach required standards. Cllr Walker explained the NCC website was not yet up to speed, even though the information was in the public domain.

In answer to a question concerning the Youth Council, Councillors were directed to contact Laurie Berruto at SNC or Kingsbrook School for information.

#### **Report from Pocket Park Co-ordinator (C King):**

The Pocket Park is still up and running, but could do with more enthusiasm and help from residents. Cllrs King and Westlake carry out most of the work necessary.

2 events were held in the Park last year; a music evening in the summer, which was very successful, and carols at Christmas, which was also popular and well attended.

The biggest problem is that of dog fouling, despite there being a bin near the entrance to the park.

There will be a working party in the near future, and a further musical event in July.

#### **Report from Police (P C Goddard):**

P C Goddard analysed the crime figures for the village (2003/2004 – 37 incidents, 2004/2005 – 47 incidents) but pointed out that this figure covered all classes of crime. There had been more crimes in May 2004 and January 2005 than in the rest of the year. He had had some success in identifying local individuals who had committed offences.

The Police had held a review and were now working to the Northamptonshire Policing Model. South Northants and Daventry were in the Western Area, and numbers of officers were quite thin on the ground.

Deanshanger absorbs some 50% of his time, as the village is the focus of young people's activity which does not happen in other areas.

He has 11 months still to serve and hopes to finish his time in this area, but as he is part of a team that may not be possible. He praised the village's active Neighbourhood Watch and confirmed that it was a very useful conduit of information.

### **Footpath Warden Report (G Crisp):**

During the past year, a number of the parish's Rights of Way have suffered the usual problems of over-ploughing, non-reinstatement and crop overgrowth. I have suggested to Northamptonshire's Rights-of-Way department, that it might be more effective in overcoming the crop overgrowth part of the problem, if they could rectify any over-ploughing problems as soon as they are identified. However, so far I have not had any positive (or other) response to this suggestion.

### **SH27 Footpath Diversion Order.**

SH27 is the footpath running from the Water Tower down to the A508. Although this Diversion Order was signed in 2003 and part of the requirement for its agreement was that three damaged stiles must be repaired. I'm pleased to say that following numerous emails and telephone calls to the County Council's Rights of Way department, the three damaged stiles were finally repaired towards the end of 2004.

### **SH28.**

This footpath is accessed from the A508, on the Grafton Regis side of Wharf Lane, opposite Bridleway SH33, which leads to Queens Oak. The access to the footpath has been so overgrown for such a long time, that I would imagine few people were aware of its location. However, earlier this year the County's Rights of Way officer was seen attacking the overgrowth, and the stile is now perfectly accessible.

### **Wharf Lane.**

Earlier this year it was thought, by the ROW officer dealing with this issue, that he was near to an agreement with the landowner, with respect to the official incorporation of Wharf Lane into the Parish's Rights of Way network. However, this subsequently proved not to be the case, and the ROW officer is now pursuing the matter via a formal procedure that has involved the gathering of signed statements from numerous parishioners who have regularly walked this route, some since the 1940's. So we now have to wait for this process to take its course.

### **Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinators Report (Mr & Mrs Rogers):**

Three calls with complaints had been passed to the Police and settled satisfactorily. Other information comes via the Ringmaster and if relevant is placed on village notice boards or passed to the Chestnut Club Chairman. Distraction burglaries are very prevalent and residents must be careful during the summer months as people take advantage of houses, garages and sheds being left unlocked. There are two Community Beat Officers who patrol the village – their phone numbers are in The Old Mail – and they have proved very helpful in settling local problems.

Mr & Mrs Rogers plan to retire at the same time as PC Goddard.

### **Questions:**

Mr Richards asked how many residents were aware of the Meeting and was advised that it has been advertised in the village according to legal requirements. He also asked about PC representation at YGRC's meetings, and mentioned what he thought was an outstanding issue concerning a proposed direction sign for the Recreation Centre. Cllr Crisp explained that Cllr Morris, who usually attended YGRC meetings, and was also looking into the matter of the proposed direction sign, had had several unavoidable commitments of late and been unable to attend the meetings, but that he (GC) would attend in June and Cllr Potter would attend in July. Mr Richards was asked to ensure that the relevant agendas and minutes were supplied to the Clerk in plenty of time to enable attendance at these meetings.

Mr & Mrs Kirkbright asked if there were any plans for the land at Woodville Crescent. Cllr Crisp had briefly touched on this area during his Chairman's Report, and responded that the PC had not received a proposal from its Woodville Crescent Committee, and when a proposal was made it would be discussed by the PC and then the information circulated to interested residents. He advised Mr & Mrs Kirkbright to check the PC's agendas to see when the matter would be discussed. Mrs Rogers asked if the unadopted sewers under the land would be protected if building took place and Cllr Crisp assured her that they would be.

Mr Rogers asked if dogs could be banned from the Pocket Park - County Cllr Walker said he would look into the matter.

Mrs Rogers asked if any action could be taken against speeding on the A508 at the weekends - again County Cllr Walker said he would look into the matter.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.