

LAMPOR AND HANGING HOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Wednesday 22 May 2024

Lampport Hall, Northamptonshire at 6.30 pm

1. Attendance and apologies
- Cllr Bob Cox
Cllr Cathy Dugmore
Cllr Jonathan Farr
Cllr Colin Harris (Chairman)
Cllr Percy May
Cllr Dominic Sinnott
Cllr Richard Flavell While

In attendance: WNC Cllr Kevin Parker and 6 parishioners

Apologies were received from Liz and John Smoczynski, Sarah Lee, Mary and Tim Parker and WNC Cllr Jonathan Harris

2. Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting 10 May 2023
The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. Financial Report and Accounts
Audited Financial Report and Accounts for the year to 31st March 2023 are available to view on the Parish Council website. The Parish Council closed the financial year with a balance of £3,429.25 against an opening balance of £3,568.50 brought forward from the previous financial year. Included in the true balance is £263.80 allocated for defibrillator maintenance. The reduction in the brought forward figure was due to the VAT paid on the speed cameras of £850 which is not recoverable to the following financial year. Councillors continue to spend the precept wisely and keep control of expenditure wherever possible.

4. Chairman's Report
The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 90th Annual Parish Meeting.

The AGM was held last Wednesday when the council re-elected me to be chairman for another year. My thanks go to this excellent team for their support and diligence, so I look forward to working together again as they take up their offices as follows:

Taking care of trees, footpaths and verges, Jonathan Farr continues as a valuable and indispensable vice-chairman. Representing us at the countryside charity organisation CPRE, Bob Cox also maintains our defibrillator. As our IT consultant and website creator, Richard Flavell-While keeps us up to date in this digital world. For social eventing, public relations and litter pick coordination we look to Cathy Dugmore. For website assistance and the vital communication newscast known as the community link that is broadcast by Percy May from wherever he is in the world.

We say farewell and a huge thank you for all his work on the council to councillor Dale Gasson, Dale and his wife Ruth will be greatly missed as they move south to pastures new where we wish them a bright and happy future. This left us with a casual vacancy on the council carrying the office of Highways. We are most fortunate to have filled this post with an experienced parish councillor, Dominic Sinnott of Faxton Grange who was co-opted at the AGM. We are pleased to welcome Dominic and note that this appointment increases the representation of Lampport village on the council.

Fast tracking us through the departments of WNC when we need answers and solutions deserves a big thank you to WNC councillors Jonathan Harris and Kevin Parker.

Leaving the best until last, how could we possibly manage without a steady hand on the tiller, an ability to absorb the constant flow of emails and the knowledge to guide us through the correct procedures that conduct us through the business of the day. I do of course refer to our clerk, Mrs Frances Allbury.

Planning applications settled at five in total, two of which were some of the largest applications that we have seen for quite a while. A new build at Dale Farm and a huge renovation of the Old Rectory, both quite long-term projects.

The traffic issues in Lamport have been and will continue to be a cause for concern that will be ongoing for some time yet. Mark Stocker has been instrumental in pursuing WNC to implement stricter control both over speeding and the use of an illegal route for commercial HGVs through the village. With Mark's assistance we have purchased two speed cameras, one is now in place and for the moment maintained by Mark who also supplies the data capture. The second camera will be installed when a suitable post is confirmed as a safe location. The cameras were purchased with the aid of a grant, and we thank Lamport Hall for paying for the compulsory licence for the cameras. More detailed information on this at the end of the meeting.

A second a much larger initiative has been created by Mrs Sarah Lee by forming the Lamport Residents Safety Association to be known as LRSA. Incorporating a wide range of subjects that identify the traffic issues, an inaugural meeting attended by councillor Jonathan Farr has been held and a report presented to the council.

Inconsiderate parking remains something of a problem. The decision on where to park our cars in the villages can adversely affect other residents' ability to drive safely and with unobscured vision. Parking considerately is a must for all of us so we should all try really hard to keep this in mind.

Our Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator Peter Dugmore is standing down this year. We thank Peter for his excellent reportage and for staying on for a longer period than he originally intended. Notification has been posted on the community link and the community website advertising the vacancy. The neighbourhood has been relatively quiet this year apart from a ripple of consternation over the YFC event in February. A meeting with the YFC chairman concluded that a more efficient traffic control system will be in place for any future revels.

The social Mojo and The Church Volunteers have held various events for us all to enjoy and we look forward to many more. These occasions play an important part in keeping our community together so we should offer as much support as possible.

From the UK Government the council has been presented with a framed photographic portrait of King Charles III, on display at this meeting, which will be housed in Lamport Hall. Regarding Lamport Hall, thanks are due to Mark Herrod for again providing a permanent venue for our meetings. It is most gratifying and appropriate to be able to hold our meetings within our own pariah

The Chairman's report concluded by thanking everyone for listening and following question time he hoped those present would enjoy the tour of the gardens kindly arranged by Lamport Hall's head gardener, although as I write this report it looks rather like a case of umbrellas at the ready.

5. Social Events Mojo Committee

In the past 12 months the group has purchased a portable PA system to use at events and produced 'welcome to the village' cards for new residents and share groups. Many free events are organised with paid for events just covering the cost. We do however offer subsidised free places for those who are struggling financially.

Since setting up the group the following events were held: Queens Platinum Jubilee barn party with 100+ villagers attending. Open Gardens and Carols on the Green on Christmas Eve (2022 and 2023) with a great turn out of approximately 80 carollers. Three quiz nights were held in The Swan with another organised for October 2024. Attendances exceeded expectations with tickets being sold out. Quiz nights are now bi-annual. Parishioners also enjoyed a Coronation party and barn dance, a picnic on the green, safari supper and the annual August BBQ.

A new innovation was a craft evening and book club although not as well supported as had been hoped. Another safari supper is being held on 13 July 2024.

The Social Mojo Group thanked all residents for their support and looked forward to welcoming everyone to the next event.

New volunteers are always welcome. If you can offer help with the facebook group, social events or the gmail account please speak to Nigel or Sue Cole, Christine Ingram, Dale or Ruth Gasson or Pat George.

6. Neighbourhood Watch

The Chairman said that this topic was included in his report under item 4 above.

7. Report from West Northamptonshire Council prepared by Cllr Jonathan Harris - Liberal Democrat Councillor - Brixworth Ward 6 May 2024. Another extremely busy year. As well as casework across the Brixworth ward, I have held the following roles:

Corporate Scrutiny - Committee Member

Democracy and Standards - Committee Member

Planning Policy - Committee Member

Strategic Planning - Substitute committee member

Children, Education and Housing Overview and Scrutiny - Substitute committee member

Health and wellbeing - Local Area Partnership - Ward member for Rural North LAP

I am also a representative on the cross party **Bus Enhanced Partnership Group** and cross party **Sustainability Group**. In addition, I attend cabinet regularly as an opposition councillor to query proposals and offer alternative ideas.

West Northants Council

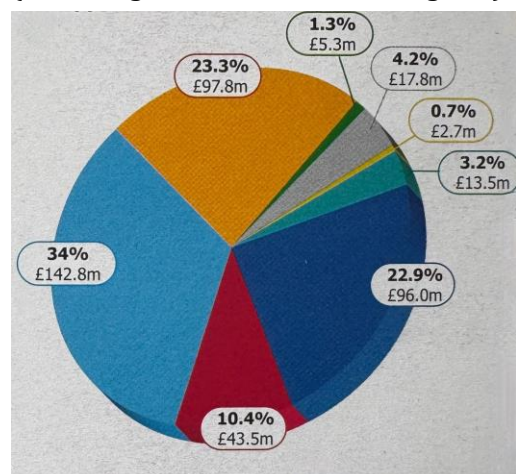
As at period 10 financial reporting (end of January - the most recent figures on council performance at the time of writing), the council saw further pressure primarily within Adult Social Care with the overall forecast overspend at year end (31st March 24) increasing to £4.2m. The council has to have a balanced budget, so the administration will be looking to see if it can capitalise any of this overspend.

In effect, however, it still is debt which will have to be funded.

Parliament's cross-party local government select committee's report, released this year, found "systemic underfunding of local councils in England" and a £4bn hole in council funding

for 2024/25. They also report a real terms reduction of 25% since 2016. At its current 'run rate', West Northants is showing a funding gap of some £80 million within the next four years. This is clearly an unsustainable situation for the long term.

In 2024/2025, West Northamptonshire Council will receive approximately £419.4 million (excluding the dedicated schools grant) to deliver the day to day running of its services. The money received from council tax makes up around two-thirds of this total income, with the remainder coming from sources including government grants and part of the national business rates.



The council's budgeted spend for 2024/2025 is as follows:

- Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (34%)
- Children's Services (23.3%)
- Education Services (1.3%)
- Corporate Services (4.2%)
- Chief Executive Services (0.7%)
- Communities and Opportunities (3.2%)
- Place and Economy (22.9%)

Central Resources and Financing

(10.4%) **Photo ID for elections**

All elections now require photo ID for those voting in person. A full list of suitable photo IDs can be found here: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID

Those without any form of voter ID can obtain a 'voter authority certificate' (for free) by contacting the council at: www.westnorthants.gov.uk/VoterID

2025 Elections and boundary changes

The new ward boundaries will take effect from the May 2025 West Northants Council elections, with the current Brixworth ward being split into three and with some additional villages being incorporated into them. The wards will be named as follows:

- Brixworth
- Rural North East
- Naseby

Current Brixworth Ward Community Larder

Within the Brixworth ward, I continue to support and be a co-ordinator for the Brixworth Community larder which has now been operating for around eighteen months. The larder does not just serve Brixworth residents but within the wider ward and in some instances beyond. The larder has been focussed on helping people through the cost of living crisis. The larder serves an average of 68 people per week with an average reach of 45 children and 120 adults.

59/60 bus

Following the successful Lib Dem budget amendment last year (February 2023) to prevent a budget cut in order to provide ongoing support for this bus route and 5 other routes across the area, at the end of 2023 we were confronted with a different challenge.

The bus operator (UNO) decided that it was no longer going to operate any of its bus routes in West Northamptonshire. We worked closely with officers to ensure that the route was tendered for and were pleased that last month it was announced that the route would continue with a new operator - Stagecoach. Stagecoach took over on the 11th March without a break in service and now have a 12 month contract with an option for an extension of a further 12 months. We have met with the new operator and are exploring how the route can be grown in terms of passenger journey numbers and to explore if there are any additional connections that could be made. On that point, we have been working with Cold Ashby Parish Council to explore the viability of adding the bus back into the route, with things looking promising.

Allotments

For the past six months, I and the Focus Team have been supporting a campaign to protect some allotments in Brixworth that are under threat of loss by the land owners for the development of housing. The proposed houses are speculative in nature. The campaign has received widespread publicity (BBC and ITV) and a petition of 1134 signatories has been presented to West Northamptonshire Council asking for their support to protect them.

Road condition/surfaces & fly tips

Road conditions have continued to deteriorate, a culmination of underfunding at a national level as well as the woes of

Northamptonshire County Council's section 114 (bankruptcy notice) meaning that spend was designated for essential services only. Getting this fixed is a big challenge and will require significant investment. It has been estimated that it will require £200 million to bring roads back to a stable and satisfactory standard. Fly tips continue to be a problem with over 17,000 reported last year.

Parish liaison and Support

I continue to support and work with parishes within the Brixworth ward. In its current configuration, the Brixworth ward consists of 13 parishes (and therefore 13 parish councils) and 8 parish meetings. My contact details are: E:

jonathan.Harris@westnorthants.gov.uk

T: 07759 977981

Brixworth Climate Action Group

For the past 12 months, I have been supporting and working with the Brixworth Climate Action Group. This group, working in partnership with the parish council, has been developing a 'green' framework for the parish so that it can reference all decisions against it, carried out hedgerow and community orchard planting and is now in the process of formulating a health and well being garden/area within one of the existing green space local parks.

Further News and Updates

UK 100 Leadership Academy

I was the council's representative at the UK100 Climate Leadership Academy. A series of three weekend workshops with 20 councillor attendees across the country, coming together to fully understand the "Powers In Place" that councils of all tiers have to drive and shape the

nature and climate agenda within their councils. The powers cover five key areas; **Waste, Nature, Energy, Buildings** and

Transport. Working with the cross-party Sustainability Group, I have been focussed on supporting the development of a Climate Strategy which sits now as an officer's responsibility to draft before wider council and public engagement. A core element has been encouraging the Planning Policy Team to incorporate aspects of this approach into the development of the new draft combined local plan.

S106/Cil Review

A team has been established to review the status of 106 for the whole of West Northamptonshire. This partly due to some legacy queries and slow payments without the old 'Borough' area. This is leading to some severe delays in clarification of outstanding amounts and physical payments being made.

Combined Local Plan for West Northamptonshire

The Draft Combined Local Plan is now live for consultation until the 2nd June. The draft documents and proposed site allocations are now in the public domain and are available here: <https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/planning/west-northamptonshires-local-plan-reg18/>

Report prepared by WNC Councillor Kevin Parker

Kevin briefly summarised his involvement as a Ward Councillor for Brixworth Ward. Appointments: Assistant Cabinet Member, Finance: Vice Chair, Strategic Planning Committee: Substitute Member, South Planning Committee: Member, Scrutiny Place & Economy: Member, Democracy & Standards Committee. In addition I represented WNC on the following charities: Clipston, Scaldwell, Isham, Thomas Roe Brixworth. This accounted for some 200 meetings (physical/teams/training) in the year.

As you would expect Finance took a considerable time and was key to the operation of WNC. The 2022/23 budget was achieved considering the cost pressures that were absorbed and was a very good performance. It is too early to give an indication of the current out-turn although period 9 showed we were adrift by £3.5M to budget. This year will be subject to inflationary and cost of living pressures impacting on services. Demand led to pressures on Children's Services and Adult Social Care. Home to school transport and temporary accommodation have experienced increased demand. The net budget 2024/5 (£415M) will be challenging due to Children's Services and Adult Social Care which are regulatory services.

There were many parish issues, mainly planning and highways related which were resolved, although some remain ongoing, coupled with resident queries which of course must remain confidential.

8. Speed Cameras, Lamport High Street

Mark Stocker gave an overview of progress made with the first speed camera installed. The second camera will be put in place once the repeater post is deemed to be safe. Data collected shown that when the sign was pointing towards the A14, the speeds of traffic exiting the village from the A508 were 65.6% below 30 mph and 26.4% between 31 and 35 mph. Then when the sign was pointing towards the A508, the speeds of traffic exiting the village from the A508 coming from the A508 were 83.4% below 30mph and 12.5% between 31 and 35 mph. There was a smaller, but measurable increase in the speeds of traffic entering the village from the A14 when the sign was turned around. Therefore traffic appeared to be slower when the sign was pointing in the direction of incoming traffic. Mark was concerned that the length of time when the batteries needed recharging was reducing. The Clerk passed information to Mark relating to a member of Lamport Hall maintenance team who may be able to assist with managing the cameras.

9. Defibrillator

Cllr Cox said that he was sure residents of Hanging Houghton were aware that the red phone box near the Old School House contains a defibrillator. It is available to anyone who is at risk of suffering a heart attack or cardiac arrest. Anyone can use a defibrillator as it tells you verbally what to do at every stage of use. The crucial thing to do in an emergency is to ring 999 before doing anything else. When the emergency services are contacted, they initiate the telephone tree and anyone available can then get the machine to a casualty in the locality. When the emergency services arrive, they will take over the role of the volunteer defibrillator and continue CPR if necessary.

Practical instructions and support are available on the **British Heart Association website** [Welcome to British Heart Foundation - BHF](#). This website is an excellent place to look if you would like training or need more information.

Open Question Time

None

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.20 pm. Due to the inclement weather the tour of Lamport gardens was postponed to a later date.

Signed:

Date: