

Wistow Cum Newton Harcourt Parish Meeting (Zoom Meeting)

Monday 7th December 2020

1. Apologies were received from: Councillor James Hallam, Councillor Rani Mahal, Mike Lockwood, Catriona Scott, Joe Goddard, Bob and Pat Clayton.

There were 14 persons present including 3 officers:

Julie Guiver - Chair, Graham Handsley - Treasurer and Celia Bates - Clerk

2. Minutes of the last meeting 27th August 2020 were circulated prior to this meeting and were approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising

Julie reported that Celia had taken on the role of Clerk to the Parish Meeting and thanked Bal for undertaking the role previously. Best wishes have been sent to Bal and her family for the future.

4. Chairs Report

Julie began by expressing condolences on behalf of the Parish Meeting to:

Richard Jameson on the very sad loss of Jill. Jill always supported village functions. She always had a ready smile, encouraging and supporting people in the community. She is very sadly missed.

Also, our condolences go to Cherry Rae-Smith on the sudden loss of Terry in September. Although they left Newton Harcourt two years ago now, they dedicated much of their time to village matters & put in a huge effort over many years. Cherry admits that his loss has left a huge void in her life

Most recently, we learned of the sad death of Morgan Pierce, farmer at Glebe Farm on Newton Lane. He was a personal friend, & many in the village have great stories to tell about being in his company. Our condolences go to Jenny, John and Mark and families.

Julie noted that there were still volunteers willing to help out during the COVID restrictions. If support / errands are required, please contact Jo Mansfield, Catriona Scott or one of the Parish Meeting representatives who can point you in the right direction.

Julie reported on the following:

- Thank you to those who have taken part in any of the have-your-say surveys that have been shared recently.
- Neighbourhood link (www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk) : You can sign up and be notified by email about local Police issues, including news and updates . This also provides a contact point to report anything which you think needs highlighting to the Police. Recently, cars parked on the bridge, not seemingly 'walkers' or usual visitors to the area, were reported as being suspicious.
- Gina and Graham Handsley collected donations of food for The Trussell Trust Foodbank in Wigston. A huge boot full of goodies was delivered on Monday 15th December. Thank you to everyone who contributed. It will make a huge difference to families struggling to make Christmas something special this year.
- Julie expressed thanks to all who have given time to support the village. Through people's generosity, we were able to send £410 to MacMillan in September. Renovating benches, varnishing the village pump, maintaining the village noticeboard, litter picking and gardening around the village all make Newton Harcourt look loved and cared for. We should feel proud of living where people want to visit!

- The Residents Facebook group and What's App groups have been a lifeline to some during these strange COVID times and have helped to lift people's spirits and stay connected. Thank you to all those who contribute to our social media. Let us know if you want to add your phone number to the Whatsapp group or join our Facebook page (search Newton Harcourt and Wistow).
- The annual Village Carol Singing will not be taking place this year due to COVID restrictions but we hope as many people in the village will take part in a 'Worldwide Christmas Eve Jingle'. On Christmas Eve at 6pm we are asking everyone to come outside and ring a bell for 2 minutes to spread Christmas spirit and to help Santa fly that sleigh.

Highways and VAS

A Zoom Meeting was held on 16th November with members of the County Council Traffic and Signal Department, Councillor Feltham and Councillor Rani Mahal and W&NH Parish chair, treasure and clerk.

The aim of the VAS meeting was to find a way forward for traffic calming through Newton Harcourt.

LCC would make £2000.00 available to W&NH for one battery operated, moveable VAS sign which could move from dedicated posts positioned on both sides of the roads in 'suitable' places. Two posts would be funded by LCC at a cost of £250 per post, any additional posts would be paid for by the Parish Meeting. LCC would advise on insurance and consultation with residents on the sighting of posts/signs. Once in place, their upkeep and maintenance would become the responsibility of the PM and be considered as a Parish asset. The sign could be shared between Wistow and Newton Harcourt, and it was hoped it would change driver behaviour and reduce the speed of vehicle travel on Glen Rd.

After discussion, it was decided to survey residents in the Parish as to whether the moveable VAS signs were the best way forward ensuring that all residents, whether at the Parish Meeting or not, would have an opportunity to have their say.

- Julie shared items of interest from **Parish Liaison Meeting** she attended on Zoom in November:
- Air quality is being measured on the A6 in Kibworth and Lutterworth. Kibworth ranked 4th out of 71 areas of the East Midlands where national air quality standards are being breached.
- The Grow-On Centre in MH has office space available if any businesses are thinking of relocating.
- HDC - budget position showing approx. £1million overspend, mainly connected with covid related extra support given out. Needless to say, the expectation is that service provision will reduce over the medium term.
- There are potential changes to the planning system which gives a new method for calculating local housing need. It will focus on areas with the greatest affordability pressures. Under the new method Harborough's local housing need would allow 1238 dwellings per annum (currently 557 in the Local Plan). The aim is to speed up the process, so there would be automatic Outline Planning Permission in 'Growth Areas', a faster planning process in 'Renewal Areas' and no change to the process in 'Protected Areas'.
- Community Safety - since March, we are now being served by the Local Hub in Harborough with the addition of the Local Response Unit in Wigston.
- Non-emergency calls communications with Leics Police either by ringing 101 or via website www.leics.police.uk

- **Phonebox renovation** It was agreed that Andy and Rob have done a super job. Many people are already expressing their thanks and saying how wonderful it is to have the phone box 'back'. It is intended that this will become a WNH History Hub.

5. Treasurers Report

Attached is the Treasurers full report of December 2020. Discussions included :-
 Graham ran through the report explaining the constraints on Parish Meetings in raising and spending the Precept, he pointed out that we have been advised by the Advisory Body, (Leics and Rutland Association of Local Councils) that there are very few areas for which we can raise and spend Precept money. LRALC has advised that the Precept should not be used for assets that the Parish Meeting does not own. We are seeking a dialogue with LRALC to discuss the options for the PM in raising and spending the Precept to ensure we are all absolutely clear.
 Given the above, Graham recommended that the Precept for 2021/2022 should be £1,000. After discussion this was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously.
 A further discussion was held on changing bank account signatories. Lloyds Bank have been very slow, so a formal complaint has been made to the Financial Ombudsman.

6. Reports from Village Groups

A46 The A46/SELAG report from Mike Lockwood was circulated prior to the meeting

- It was reported that the A46 Expressway has been cancelled. Midlands Connect and the Leicestershire County Council have decided that, in the face of objections to its build and disruption, the projected cost exceeds any potential financial gain.

FNH

- Gypsy Wood - The transfer of ownership is nearing completion.
- Peggs Wood - FNH cannot guarantee custodianship of the wood over time whereas PM may be able to; this should be appraised in the future through the PM.
- Telephone Box - Retention of the bank around the phone box is still needed. FNH now looking for volunteers to place slabs against the bank with gravel around the phone box.

PCC

- Thanks to all who helped with the maintenance of the churchyard. The consecration of the extended Churchyard has been delayed by COVID, but will take place in the future.
- Christmas Arrangements: Carols and 9 lessons on 13th Dec 2020 at 6.30pm, a normal communion service on Sunday 20th December 2020-9.15am and Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve at 11.30pm. ALL are very welcome to attend.

Green Team

- Planting has taken place along Wistow Road, and in St Lukes churchyard. Thanks to all involved.
- The metal fence near the phone box is to be moved back slightly around the old well. The adjacent bank to be retained, and planting of wild flowers and maybe a bench have been proposed.

Poors Land

- Gina Handsley explained that the details of annual donations from the Poors Land funds will be shared from the audited annual accounts at the end of January 2020. These will be circulated by an e-mail update.
- A point outstanding from the January 2020 PM update is that the 2019 donation of £450.00, towards village traffic calming measures or Reading Room refurbishment, is pending due to the ongoing conversations regarding how best to pursue these matters.

HDC Nothing to report

Reading Room

- Jo Mansfield stated that the main item of the RR October 2020 committee meeting was the proposed roof work. More details in the RR Treasurers report including an update of the Surveyor's progress and further works that need carrying out: a new sliding partition, cladding/wall insulation and upgrading the lighting.
- Jo explained that RR committee were investigating various charities from which they might apply for match funding to raise up to £30,000 towards RR maintenance and refurbishment. If anyone in the village could help with applications, please do get in touch with Jo.
- The Reading Room Committee are seeking a new chairperson and treasurer. If you would like to help and volunteer, please contact Jo Mansfield.

WI

- Jo Mansfield reported that the last WI meeting was a 'socially distanced' committee meeting where it was good to meet up and have coffee and cake.

7.Planning

The clerk reported the Planning items since the last meeting.

Croft House Farm, Post Office Lane- Approved

Conversion of barn and outbuildings to residential annex.

8.Any Other Business

Richard Brooks proposed that Village Group minutes could be circulated before Parish Meetings. Village Groups could share minutes after their own meetings which would keep everyone informed. It would help to raise the profile of groups and give a better understanding of their role in the parish, vital if new members are required. This was agreed by all at the meeting.

Mike Lockwood was thanked for his input, with the good news of the A46 Expressway cancellation.

We need to generate some interest from villagers willing to take on these RR roles :-

Chairperson of RR Committee

Treasure of RR Committee

Chairperson of FNH-Friends of Newton Harcourt

Thank you to Jo, Anthony and Catriona for their hard work over many years.

9.Date of Next Meeting

This will be held at the end of March 2020. Notice will be given of the actual date at the beginning of March.