

Cogenhoe & Whiston Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Held On Monday 21st May 2018, 7.30pm

At Cogenhoe & Whiston Village Hall, York Avenue, Cogenhoe, NN7 1NB

1. Welcome, Mr. Jon Bailey, Chairman Parish Council

Cllr Bailey welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He introduced Cllr Ian McCord, leader of South Northants Council and the other guests.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from CCllr Michael Clarke, DCllr Carole Clarke, Cllr Jim Biggs, Cllr Jean Grubb, Dr R Savage & Maggie Irvine.

3. District & County Councillor's reports

-Cllr Ian McCord, Leader South Northants Council

Thank you for your invitation to the Annual Parish Meeting.

It is great to get out to all parts of the district.

Carole and Steven know that I try to ensure that parts of the district get fair representation and ensure that this side of the M1 is not overlooked is important to me.

I don't intend to say a lot but would rather have a question and answer session so the issues you care about we can address.

However, you did ask for something on local government reform, so I shall outline a few points.

We are where we are.

I could blast the incompetence and ineptitude of all those in senior positions in NCC for the total utter mess they have made.

I could rail on that they are / were the biggest bunch of arrogant, aloof, condescending, dissembling, charlatans ever to be responsible for the control of a council.

But I won't.

It might be cathartic but does not improve the situation nor work for the future that we all now must protect.

In preparing for this tonight, I listed the sequence of events we have witnessed in this county in the past few months. Just

one of them is newsworthy, taken together, it's breath taking.

September

'damning Peer Review from Local Government Association criticising the financial planning and management of NCC

October

Chief Executive, Paul Blantern, is relieved of his duties. Damon Lawrenson the former head of finance (S151) takes charge as interim CEO

Consultation begins on cuts to Libraries, highway maintenance, trading standards, bus routes and more, target savings E9.8m

December —

NCC publish their budget showing the need for additional savings and cuts bringing the total to f34m

January — it all begins to crumble.

' Government order Best Value Inspection by Max Caller

NCC realise their in- year budget will not balance and they have no funds to cover this short fall.

Land sale does not happen resulting in the Section 114 notice. Halting all unnecessary spend.

February

' Auditors KPMG issue an Advisory Notice cautioning NCC that their budget setting may be unlawful.

' The budget was eventually passed after some minor tinkering.

' Heather Smith is disposed as Leader of the Conservative Group on NCC but remains as Leader of the Council. ' Sale and lease back of One Angel Square announced

March —

Max Caller delivers his Best Value Review that was excoriating on every page.

As part of his recommendations he says NCC is beyond repair and needs to be replaced with two unitary councils.

' Heather Smith resigns as Leader of NCC.

April —

' Secretary of State for Housing and Communities Sajid Javid announced he was minded to appoint Commissioners to run NCC.

Damon Lawrenson the interim Chief Exec and former finance supremo leaves NCC

Matt Golby becomes the Leader of NCC.

Sec of State issues a formal invitation to reorganise local government to all the districts and boroughs and NCC.

' Sale of One Angel Square completes

May —

Sajid Javid becomes Home Secretary new Sec of State,

James Brokenshire confirms the appointment of two Commissioners Brian Roberts and Tony McArdle All councils agree to have a single submission. NBC with the support of Daventry and SNC seek guidance on the possibility of a unitary for Northampton to be pointed to the statutory guidance. (Whitehall speak for "no")

' SNC and CDC announce their future intentions (more later)

Within the statutory guidance, the Government want any number of councils provided it is not ONE so it kills off the single unitary ambition held by some at the County Council.

The new councils must have a population in excess of 300,000. so that's 2.

Whole districts must be used, you cannot change boundaries — that kills off the NBC ambition for expanded boundaries.

You can overstep the county boundary, (but police legislation must be respected) so that kills off working with Cherwell for us.

West is the combination of Northampton, Daventry and South Northants. North is the amalgamation of Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northants.

There is one answer TWO unitary councils, West and North.

This criteria has been worked up carefully to give one answer, dressed up as a locally crafted solution. Have no doubt, we are being done to, we have no choice. If we decide not to co-operate the Commissioners will be asked if they have a view.

Progress thus far has been rapid, PWC have been engaged and a firm of researchers also enlisted to help with the consultation response. Councils have made budgets available. There is a resignation that our fate has been sealed. Our task now is to get on and deliver it.

Government have extended the time for the submission to the end of August, as for the rest of the timetable it runs like this:-

May —June —work up a proposal

June —July — consult and engage on that proposal with all stakeholders, Parishes, health sector, business, voluntary sectors, etc and general public

August make any changes to the proposal following consultation and then submit by end of August
Government take end of summer into Autumn to review the proposal and consult on it.

By October / November they may give a decision that the Sec of State is minded to approve or not

Should he approve this then orders in House of Commons would be laid at end of this year or early 2019.

The elections to the districts in 2019 would be postponed, in effect cancelled. The Parish Elections would continue.

The Shadow Authorities would be established April / May 2019. They would run for approx. a year to establish what the actual authority would do.

The new councils of West Northants and North Northants would come into being as a legal entity 1 April 2020 and elections to those councils Thursday 7 May 2020

There are others to remember in this at Cherwell.

For the past 8 years we have had probably one of the most successful local government partnerships anywhere in England.

Millions of pounds have been saved. Staff and resources shared. As two, we have attracted higher calibre staff and punched above our weight. The collective SNC — CDC is much more than the sum of the two parts.

Legally, we cannot become a unitary council. Policing legislation prevents that. As the future of SNC and Northants is being dictated to us by Whitehall, Cherwell have a choice and have exercised that choice in deciding that the only logical thing to do is to end the CDC — SNC partnership.

I must stress to you all that this is an amicable separation. Cherwell Council, their residents, and our shared staff are the most innocent of all innocent victims in this. The CDC baby is being thrown out with the NCC bathwater.

We will continue to serve residents and we will continue to work to ensure that the business as usual is delivered and the parting will be as smooth as the joining together.

As you can see, we have a huge task ahead of us. I will need the help of you, the parishes and residents. Please, take part in the consultation when it comes in a few weeks time. Please be assured that throughout all of this, you, our residents, you are the only people that matter, and I will stand firm to ensure that we get the best possible outcome we can.

Comments

There were many comments and concerns raised by residents following Cllr McCord's presentation, most of which reiterated his comments about the frustration of what has gone wrong at NCC and the implications for residents, especially with the loss of the bus service which would cause huge problems for residents.

Cllr Bailey reassured residents that the Parish Council were working hard to try to find an alternative to the bus and all options (including re-routing the No 41 were being considered).

Q Could policy be changed to allow for new unitary to cross over policing boundaries?

A Not impossible but could not be done quickly enough

Q Concerns that Cogenhoe is a very long way from potential West Northants unitary location, would Cogenhoe not sit better in the North Northants area with Wellingborough?

A Parish boundaries can't be changed as part of this process but a boundary review may be necessary eventually, such comments should be submitted to the public consultation.

Q Concern was expressed that by adding South Northants to Northampton Town would make it difficult to meet the rural needs of the villages?

A Cllr McCord shares this concern as 57% of the unitary population will live in Northampton town whose need will be very different to the rural parishes, he stressed the need to look at the problems imaginatively.

Q Concern was expressed about planning, and a lack of local knowledge about rural locations?

A Cllr McCord again shared this concern and would be pushing for 3 planning authorities in the short term.

Cllr Bailey thanked Cllr McCord for attending and for his very interesting presentation.

-Cllr Michael Clarke, NCC, (Hackleton & Grange Park division)- read in his absence by Cllr Jon Bailey, Chairman

NCC COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018

The 2017/18 year has been an extremely difficult one at the County Council. If one was looking for one word to sum it up it would be "money", or more precisely money running out.

The commonly held view is that Government funding is insufficient to meet the escalating cost of Adult Social Care. The latter is increasing as we all get older and live longer and the population of the County

continues to grow. The County Council is also constrained on how much it can increase the Council Tax (2% per annum), without holding a costly referendum to request a higher figure. We are allowed a 3% increase which is earmarked to address the financial pressures through adult Social Care.

At a time when the finances were already weakening, the Cabinet endorsed an ambitious, yet costly, plan, the brainchild of the now departed Chief Executive, called Next Generation Council model. The aim was to establish several “stand alone” organisations that would, according to the theory, deliver significant savings to the Council in delivering its key services. It is now known that the whole cost of setting up these semi-autonomous bodies was in the region of £50m. The tragedy is that the money was spent while the underlying financial position of the Council was already under stress. It produced no savings and has since been discontinued and wound down. Services have been brought back in house.

The second half of the year witnessed the sudden resignation of Dr. Blantern, the chief Executive, whose brainchild “Next Generation Council” was. That happened in November. Shortly afterwards, the Council reported a £9.8m overspend and started a consultation on removal of bus subsidies, closure of 21 libraries and the paring back of Trading Standards. The savings were later incorporated into the 2018/2019 NCC budget together with £35m of additional savings.

Early in 2018 the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government announced the appointment of a Government Inspector – Mr. Caller – who was tasked with analysing why the Council had not delivered “Best Value”, as had been reported in consecutive years by the External auditors, KPMG. He was also provided with a critical LGA Peer Group review of the Council’s systems. The subsequent report in arch was highly critical of the way the Council had been run. It pointed to a culture of endemic overspend, year after year, funded by drawing down reserves and selling assets like buildings and land to generate liquidity.

The Caller report triggered the resignation of the Council Leader, Cllr. Heather Smith, followed by the departure of the interim Chief Executive, Damien Lawrenson, who had previously been Finance Director. The Finance portfolio holder was relieved of his position

The Government responded to the Caller report by announcing the appointment of two Commissioners, whose brief is to oversee financial management at the Council. There is a new Council Leader – Cllr. Matthew Golby – and Cabinet, which has a priority of sticking to its budgets and avoiding overspends. The Government also announced the reorganisation of local Government structures in Northamptonshire, again a recommendation of the Government Inspector’s report. As of May 2020, the current two tier system will be replaced by two, new unitary Councils: one in the north comprising the present East Northants, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough districts; one in the west comprising Daventry, South Northants and Northampton Borough. So we are embarked on a programme of considerable change to ensure that the County Council’s current services e.g. Highways, Childrens Services and Adult Social Care are merged with the refuse and planning functions performed by the district councils. It is a tall order. NCC managed to balance its 2017/18 budget by using up all its general reserves. It overspent by £12m. The reserves have to be replaced under law in the short term. We have, in addition, to deliver £35m of savings in the current year.

.....apart from that, everything is fine!

-Report from DCllr Steven Hollowell - Brafield and Yardley ward

-A Summary of the Year’s Achievements

South Northamptonshire continues to be ranked as one of the best places to live in the country. Last year’s annual Halifax survey rated SNC area as 13th in the Country.

Unemployment is one of the lowest in the Country although SNC runs a job club to help anyone without a job to get back into work.

Waste Recycling

Our waste and recycling service has had a very good year - SNC is the 8th best authority in the UK for recycling thanks to our residents putting 61% of everything they throw away into their recycling bin. Our ultimate goal is to become the top authority in the country.

SNC Finance

Funding from central government continues to decline but with growing housing numbers and increasing business rates we continue to produce balanced budgets without introducing damaging cuts to our services.

SNC continue to be one of the best Councils at collecting Council Tax with 99% of all tax collected. The national average is 98% and SNC is ranked 16th in the whole of the Country on collection rate.

The SNC part of the Council Tax bill was raised by 3% which is £5.41 a year for a Band D property, or approximately 10p per week, making the total £185.78 per year. This increase is in line with inflation. SNC only keep 11% of the total bill with NCC taking the biggest share at 73%; Northamptonshire Police take 13% and; the parishes about 3%.

Chief Executive

A new Joint Chief Executive, Yvonne Rees, was engaged on 23 March 2017. After working her notice from her previous employers of Surrey County Council and Mole Valley District Council, Yvonne started with SNC/CDC in July. She has started a restructuring of the senior management team which will create additional senior level capacity to deliver on the many programs that are running across the two councils.

Planning

Local Plan part 2

The preparation of the Local Plan Part 2 has been an ongoing project. This will replace the existing policy that was adopted by SNC in 1997. The final draft will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate who will appoint an Inspector who in turn, will hold an Examination in Public (like a public inquiry). The final processes will hopefully result in a new Local Plan being adopted in the first half of 2019.

Five-Year Land Supply

National Planning Policy demands that every council has a bank of planning consents such that, there is a minimum of 5 year's housing supply in that district. If we fail to have this, there is a presumption in favour of the development, irrespective of village confines and other planning tools that the council can rely on.

Our land supply is currently 10.2 years. That of some neighbouring councils is considerably less.

Conservation & Heritage

South Northamptonshire contains some of the country's most quintessentially English landscapes stretching as it does from the northern Cotswolds to the gentle rolling hills in middle England. The district has 1,831 Listed Buildings within its 96 villages and two market towns. Both towns and 51 of the 96 villages have historic areas designated as conservation areas, recognising their special architectural and historic interest.

Our Conservation Strategy sets out the Council's responsibilities and aspirations for the historic environment within the district, the resources that are available to it and a programme for how it intends to undertake this task over the next five years.

Arts & Cultural

Achievements this year included the launch of an inclusive art activities centre at Yardley Hastings run by the district's first arts Community Interest Company -- **Yardley Arts**.

South Northamptonshire villages continue to benefit from the community grant-funded **Phoenix Community Cinema** screenings, with the highest take-up of any district in the County and excellent value for money.

Peer Review

The Local Government Association run a program of Corporate Peer Reviews where the aim is to get others from within local government to review what we are doing and pass comment. It is an improvement initiative where best practice can be adopted widely.

In November, SNC and Cherwell District Council received a Peer Review. The team of experts interviewed a range of people who have contact with the council including parish and town councils, leaders of other councils in the area, health sector, voluntary sector, business representatives, members of parliament, charities etc to get a flavour of what we do well and where we can improve. After a week of evidence gathering they concluded that SNC and Cherwell were well run and in a relatively strong position.

Help for Residents with 'Home Safe'

The vulnerable, disabled and elderly are being offered free home repairs following a partnership between South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) and Care & Repair (Northamptonshire) Ltd.

The scheme, entitled 'Home Safe', will offer support with a range of small home improvements such as small repairs, home security and energy efficiency measures, gas safety checks, fitting smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, trip reduction measures, the installation of grab and stair rails and assistance with electrics, plumbing and carpentry.

Those vulnerable people who may not have the means to carry out essential, minor works can benefit from this initiative which will help promote independence and, if they are currently in hospital, may allow them to return to their own home when they are discharged.

The scheme is available to home owners and tenants on low incomes if one or more of the following criteria applies to them if:

- They suffer from a long term chronic illness or have a physical disability
- They have been identified by a hospital as needing urgent minor adaptations or services to facilitate discharge
- They are at risk of further injury or illness without essential minor works or services
- They are 65 or over

For more information on the scheme visit the [Care & Repair](http://www.careandrepairnorthamptonshire.org.uk) website or email office@careandrepairnorthamptonshire.org.uk or call 01604 782250.

Local Government Re-organisation

As you may have read or seen on the local news. Northamptonshire County Council have also undergone a Peer Report, which found them seriously wanting. A Best Value Inspector was then dispatched from Westminster who quickly replicated the Peer Report and found that because of their lack of financial controls, that they should be abolished and replaced by unitary authorities.

Unfortunately, this will mean that in order to make this possible, the 7 Borough and District Councils in Northamptonshire will also be dissolved. As you can imagine, the Members of South Northamptonshire Council, who have taken great pride in their work over the years, are extremely disappointed about this. There is no plan yet for what will happen to our partner Council Cherwell. Indeed, there are no definite plans for anything yet. We can only continue to work closely with the civil servants dealing with this matter and try to ensure the best outcome for South Northamptonshire.

Addendum

Just as this report was about to be sent, important news arrived which relates to the last item above. Sadly, Cherwell District Council have decided that, in their residents' best interest, they do not wish to get involved in the Northamptonshire local government re-organisation. While this is entirely understandable, the implications for us are profound. There will have to be an expensive divorce settlement with South Northants and the staff re-assigned to one or other council. All the good work combining the work-force over recent years will have stood for nothing

It will now be more difficult to argue against the Best Value Inspector's recommendation that there should be two unitary authorities – one in the east and one in the west consisting of the present authorities of Northampton Borough, South Northamptonshire and Daventry District. The new unitary will be an area stretching from Thorplands to Braunston or Aynho.

Northampton will have the greatest representation and they will want the council offices at the Guildhall. They will want to extend Northampton in our direction and there will be no borough boundary to stop them.

It is very sad that after many years of innovative thought and mutual collaboration, authorities like South Northants will have to be dissolved – at great legal expense, because of the ineptitude of the present County Councillors who, despite accepting large expenses each month, were unable, year after year, to draw up deliverable budgets and then, ensure that that expenditure was monitored. Much has been said in favour of unitary councils based on savings of chief executive salaries – less has been said about the costs of setting up two highway authorities, two adult social care authorities, two young people’s authorities and so on.

The timetable is now uncertain but there will be a period of statutory consultation the results of which will then end up in a civil servant’s waste bin while they do what they want to do regardless. The whole business is very sad.

4. Signing of Minutes of last Parish Meeting 26.4.17

The **minutes** of the meeting held on 26.4.17 were **signed**.

5. Matters arising

There were no matters arising

6. Police Report - Towcester Neighbourhood Team, no attendance but read by Cllr Jon Bailey, Chairman

Over the last 6 months there has been a marked increase in thefts of tools from vans. This has been a national trend and not unique to South Northants. Officers from South Northants Neighbourhood Teams have spent some considerable time investigating this recent series of offending and identified a number of persons linked to a local Travellers site just on the Northants/Bucks border. On 19th February 2018 officers from Northamptonshire Police undertook several warrants within the site and arrested a number of persons. Searches yielded a large quantity of tools, mobile phones and number plates. In total 12 persons have been interviewed in relation to offences including; theft from vehicles, shoplifting and theft of fuel. Several other people are still sought for interview and those already interviewed have been bailed pending further investigation and forensic work being undertaken.

As previously stated this is a national trend and although South Northants theft crimes have significantly reduced since 19th February people should not be complacent in terms of their vehicle security and reporting of unusual and suspicious behaviour.

There have been a number of burglaries in South Northants and the team have been proactive in the villages. A Crime Prevention event was held at the end of December 2017 where residents from South Northants were invited to pop in and receive advice about improving their properties and what to look out for. The event was a great success with a large amount of people attending.

We have out a home checklist which are available from your local officer.
Police patrols have been continuing in the village

We recommend that you visit www.police.uk to access up to date crime statistics for your area. Fortunately, South Northants has no other significant crime trends and the Team are always happy to discuss any individual concerns.

Northants Police support local social networks such as ‘Brackley Burglary Crime & Prevention’, ‘Newbottle & Charlton Crime Prevention Group’, ‘Northamptonshire Street Watch’ (all Facebook) and other village networks by providing information and advice for circulation. We recognise the value of these pages for

keeping a two-way flow of information between the police and the public. The above sites have provided very popular and all communicate with each other to increase their effectiveness.

We are still keen to expand virtual networks for the sharing of information to prevent, disrupt and deter crime, so if you would like more information on how to develop a similar Facebook site for your area please contact Sergeant Michaela SIMONS. These sites have enormous potential in assisting to make the area less attractive for criminals. Please take a look at the above mentioned pages for examples of content and rules.

Members of the community that do not use the internet or social media can obtain this information from Parish Councils and NHW Schemes.

Towcester currently has an active **Street Watch** scheme that is always seeking new members. Street Watch, in a nutshell, is the equivalent of a mobile Neighbourhood Watch. In addition, it can cover the entire Community and tackle issues such as; vandalism, anti-social behaviour, drug abuse and dog fouling. If you are interested in helping your community and setting up a Street Watch scheme in your area, then please contact your local Police team at Brackley for details.

This could be something your village could take on please ask PCSO Morris for more info.

Visit our website for more information and updates:

<http://northants.police.uk/neighbourhoods>

7.Chairman's report including-

- Beacon for "Battle's Over" a Nations tribute 11.11.18

Changes for Parish Council

None.

Grants Made/agreed

Just agreed to give £950 to the Sea Scouts towards the refurbishment of their scout hut on Short Lane.

£130 was granted to the Youth Club currently running monthly events at the Village Hall

Litter pickers and high visibility jackets were purchased for £80 for the use of the school

Wreath for Remembrance Day Service at War Memorial - £30

The Heritage Society applied for £3,000 from the NHB to purchase their Green Plaques with the support of the Parish Council.

Station Road bus shelter refurbishment (near Glebe Road) was agreed including provision of a 'perch' seat but put on hold pending bus service discussions.

A village map has just been produced highlighting the main village sights and the locations of the planned Green Plaques. We will use this to produce a village map on a pedestal and put it on the PC website.

Two new wooden noticeboards have been ordered to replace the PC one at the junction of Station Road and Glebe Road and one for the Village Hall at an approximate cost of £2800 funded from CIL.

Other achievements

Xmas Tree survived the whole Xmas period.

The defibrillator was installed on the Village Hall and EMAS gave a training session in its use at the village hall in June attended by about 40 residents. The training was well received.

A new pedestrian crossing was installed by NCC Highways in autumn last year near the junction of Church Street and the Piece along with a dropped curb on Station Road just by the pub.

Village Sign was re-enamelled at a cost of £1550

Highways have agreed to paint double yellow lines round the junction of York Road and Orchard Way to reduce the problems of parking round the school. We await their work.

Planning
Penns Orchard
No known progress

Bus Garage
Application for 10 houses. Application had been recommended for refusal by SNC planning but application was withdrawn before decision.

Evidence was provided from 15 residents to NCC for the definitive map to be modified to reflect the unrecorded public right of way that passes between the bus garage and the club from Station Road and York Road

Sports and Social Club
Recent application submitted to move the Club to the site of the bowls club and double the size of the existing building. Parish Council has objected mainly on the grounds of parking. SNC planning yet to complete their own assessment.

Other Items
We have changed our grass cutter. The first two cuts were difficult given the wet weather but we expect the cutting to at usual standards from now on. The contract is for up to 10 cuts a year.

We are working with NCC to see what we can do to replace the W8 (or 43) bus service which will stop towards the end of July.

The PC and NHW Co-ordinator met with the Police and Crime Commissioner. We were impressed with his enthusiasm and knowledge. He delivered a presentation about policing in Northamptonshire which gave some explanation as to why visibility might be perceived as poor. He also addressed some recent difficulties encountered by residents, which had been the reason for the visit. I was going to summarise his presentation but given the hour I do not propose to say more but I will put a summary of the meeting on the PC website shortly.

Finances 2016/7

I have been asked what the parish council money is spent on. The main items are grass cutting, electricity for the street lights, dog bins emptying and repair of broken lights.

This years precept will be £22,000 as it was last year.

Income (less VAT)	£37,200 (including NHB and CIL totalling £11,217)
Expenditure (less VAT)	£27,677

Overall	£9,818
Current balance	£39,021

To come

November 11th events countrywide to commemorate the 100th anniversary of end of WW1. We will be lighting a beacon likely on the village hall playing fields subject to their approval, we also plan (again subject to their approval) to plant an oak tree and erect a stone on the playing fields as a lasting memorial.

We plan to get approval to borrow money (interest free) to replace all the light bulbs in the street lights over the next year. All the bulbs will be white (PLL - Compact Fluorescent Lamp) and will use half the existing electricity meaning significant savings to our costs. It will also save maintenance costs. Each costs £120 + VAT per lamp (111 lamps).

Reminder

All meeting minutes are published on website and all council meetings are public.

-Comment was passed how nice it was to have the tree in the village.

Q Could a further training session be organised for the defibrillator?

A Cllr Bailey said this would be looked into.

Q Could the signage warning of the zebra crossing be improved, people approach it too fast as there is not signs warning of it?

A Clerk to speak to Highways about this.

Q Residents were concerned that only 4 of the surrounding houses had been consulted about the Sports & Social club planning app?

A Cllr Bailey advised that anyone could comment on the application via SNC website.

Q Parking around the school was a major problem already without the sports & social club move, why had the use of the cones stopped.

A Yellow lines were due to be painted around the junction area to try to help with this & the school had stopped using the cones because they would be liable if there was an accident.

Q Are the grass cutters supposed to clear clippings?

A No only blow them from paths & paved areas.

8. Reports from Village Organisations

- Report from **Neighbourhood Watch** – Lawrence Howes area coordinator

Firstly, I would like to thank the council for inviting me to give this presentation.

The past year has been extremely successful for the village scheme.

1. The Parish Council very generously paid for enough new Neighbourhood Watch signs to cover all road entrances to the village. The Chairman also very generously helped me put them up!
2. We have seen phenomenal membership growth; going into 2017 we had 41 members, we now have 126. This is excellent news as villages with large schemes are proven to have a 30% lower crime rate.
3. Dog-fouling 'eye' signs were erected in the playing fields by us. The first ones were destroyed as young Gary Linekers used them for football target practice. Reinforced signs replaced them and these have stood the test of time and penalty shoot-outs. They appear to have produced a reduction in the dog mess problem though not eliminated it.
4. Volunteer litter-pickers from Neighbourhood Watch collected 30 bags of litter from within the village boundaries. I now have a list of volunteers prepared to carry out this task and we are continuing to litter pick on a regular basis to keep the streets cleaner.

5. A weekly 'Wotzon' is now emailed round, informing members of what is happening in the village in the coming week. This has proved very popular.

Items requiring more work

6. Cogenhoe now has a graffiti problem in two alleyways. I am confident that if the problem continues the culprit will be positively identified.
7. The Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Watch website has a problem; people sign up to the scheme without realising they need to specifically select their village. The scheme administrators acknowledge that they have some of our residents signed up but not under Cogenhoe scheme. Unfortunately, due to the new data protection rules, they will not contact these members to ask if they intended to sign up to the Cogenhoe scheme. If you know anyone who says they are in Neighbourhood Watch but do not receive my village emails please let me know or ask them to get in touch with me and I can have them opted in.

So, generally it has been a very good year for our village scheme. If any of you are not getting all the free benefits of Cogenhoe's Neighbourhood Watch please see me after the meeting.

- Report from **Picnic in the Park committee** – Tessa Darby

The event will take place on 14th July this year, 2pm. There will be the usual fun activities and any additional help on the day & to clear up would be appreciated.

-Report for **St. Peter's Church** – Rev'd Eddie Smith

The Church continues to provide a regular program of Sunday and midweek worship services, as well special seasonal church services and baptisms weddings and funerals for those living in or connected with the parish. We also have good links with the primary school and preschool. We continue to host a monthly parish lunch (on the first Thursday of each month). This June we are delighted to be welcoming a new curate, Irene Cobley, to the benefice, and we are excited about the opportunities this will bring for supporting our local village communities.

-**Village Hall & Playing Field Management Committee** – Jon Bailey, Chairman

Thanks

Albert Stanton stood down after many years and also did Gareth Goddard. Welcome to Tessa Bailey (WI) and John Grubb (St Peter's)

Very sad to hear of the death of Suzanne Tarpley who (along with her husband Terry) gave very many years of service to the Village Hall

Myself Chairman

Tessa Darby Vice Chairman

Jean Grubb Secretary

Elizabeth Packer Treasurer and Booking Secretary.

Finances

Last year we made a loss of about £4K but we did spend £10k on the car park resurfacing and £4.5K on hall maintenance. This year we expect to make a profit of about £2k. Reserves are over £28K.

Good use of the hall through most of the week so income has increased.

Village Hall Development

Slow progress detailed plans being priced and costings and then planning application. Plan is to create an extension that the pre-school can securely use this freeing up the use of the main hall and York room throughout the day. We would then plan to open the hall during the week for residents.

Car Park

We had the car park resurfaced at some expense. We now have some problems with it and we plan to get the contractor back to decide how to resolve the issues.

Myself and Malcom Scott spent a few days last autumn putting in a new drain and soak hole to get rid of the excess water that was sitting on the new car park. That has basically been a success.

Caretaker

We plan to shortly take on a caretaker to help run the hall day to day.

Football pitch

Our existing football team Manfield Rangers has folded but we expect to have a new football team based here from next season.

New goal posts delivered and installed - slightly moved the pitch. Some of pitch re-seeded.

Other points

Village resident has taken on the task of making proposals to update/upgrade the existing play area.

National grants are likely to cover a significant amount of the cost.

Rural Cinema runs monthly last Wednesday of the month at 4pm. Average attendance is about 25 with a maximum of 40.

Table Tennis club now meet weekly on Tuesday at 6pm. New table purchased for their use.

Field gate replaced.

Q How could residents make comments/suggestions about the play area update?

A Email to VH committee

Q Could an additional dog waste bin be installed on the VH boundary

A Unfortunately not as collection company would not be able to access with their vehicle.

Q Are there any plans to upgrade the VH chairs which are rather uncomfortable?

A Yes, new chairs or adding of cushions is being looked into.

-Youth Group – Cllr Jon Bailey

The Youth group continues to meet monthly for 8-13year olds. Numbers vary but it seems to average 10-12 young people.

Q Could the day that the group meets on be changed from a Friday as it clashes with Sea Scouts?

A Difficult to move it because of VH availability and will probably still clash with something.

-Pre-School – no attendance, no report.

-Report from Pocket Park - Cllr Jeremy Cunnington

The Pocket park is managed by 3 people and rented from Castle Ashby estate. The current project is to finish the nature trail, the posts for which are already in situ. More volunteers for the regular maintenance mornings which are once a month for a couple of hours would always be welcomed.

Q Resident had noticed horse hoof marks on the top path, didn't think horse were allowed there?

Q Resident commented about issues with dogs not on leads in the park

A Cllr Cunnington to raise both issues with Sue Carverhill

-Report from Footpath warden – Terry Coles

I have walked all the footpaths in the Cogenhoe and Whiston Parish, either alone or with the Cogenhoe Walking for Health Group, over the last three weeks. In the main, the paths are in good order, although some suffer from the growth of vegetation inevitable at this time of the year, particularly resulting from the heavy rains and subsequent sunshine. They are all passable on foot.

Arising from 2017 Report -

Following my report last year, the signpost at the junction of four paths near the bend on Mill Lane has been replaced by waymarkers. Whilst these do not actually indicate the destination of each path as the signpost did, at least they are not showing the wrong destination

Issues -

There is some work going on at the back of Roe Farm affecting the footpath (KF9) from the Whiston Road to the bottom of Church Street in Cogenhoe but this is not blocking access as there is plenty of room to avoid it.

At that point, the definitive path actually crosses a stream across a bridge which is completely overgrown with nettles. However, it is not necessary to follow this route as there is a wider access point nearby. The footpath from Whiston Slade Farm (KF24) crosses a field but there is no waymarking at the field edge to show which direction to take.

Action Required -

As we all know, the County Council, which is responsible for Rights of Way, is in serious financial difficulties. Inevitably, Rights of Way are not at the top of a list of responsibilities attracting urgent funding. Whilst health and safety issues will be dealt with as soon as they are reported, other less important work will be put on the back-burner. However, I am assured that the footpath mowing programme will be going ahead and should begin over the next two or three weeks.

The Rights of Way Officer will look at improving waymarking at Whiston Slade Farm.

Other than the mowing programme, no further action is required at this stage.

A report on each individual footpath is attached as an appendix to this report. **See Appendix 1**

Report from **Cogenhoe Walking for Health Group** – Terry Coles

The Cogenhoe Walking for Health Group meets fortnightly on a Thursday morning and walks for around an hour, covering about 3 miles, using the footpaths around the village and those in the Brafield and Little Houghton parishes. The group was started towards the end of 2009 and has gone from strength to strength, having around 12 members at the outset. If all of our active members turned up on the same day now we would have a line of almost 50 people. Our normal turn out is between 25 and 35.

We meet at the Scout Hut in Short Lane and aim to begin walking at 10 am, returning to the Scout Hut where we have coffee, tea and biscuits. Generally, we finish by 12 noon. Not only is the aim to keep active but also to have a social time together, both whilst walking and afterwards.

On the intervening Thursdays, we also have a Saunter Group led by Elizabeth Packer. This meets at the Village Hall at 10 am and is mainly for those less mobile members of our community who, nevertheless, like to keep as active as possible, both physically and socially, by walking for about 30 minutes around the village before returning to the Village Hall for tea and coffee.

The groups are overseen by the Leisure Department of Cherwell and South Northants Councils and are part of a nationwide network of some 375 Walking for Health groups supported by The Ramblers, Macmillan and the People's Postcode Lottery.

-Report from **WI** – Read by Cllr Jon Bailey, Chairman

Our group meets at 7.45 pm on the first Wednesday of the month in the York Room at the village hall. We have 20 members at present and have a varied selection of speakers. The headquarters of the Northamptonshire Federation is in Moulton and they provide a wide variety of courses, outings and events to suit all tastes. We also link with other local WIs to join in their activities. We are a friendly group and always delighted to welcome visitors. Contact Maggie Irvine on 01604 891059 or email to cojoi@aol.com.

-Report from **Ladies Fellowship** – read by Elizabeth Packer

The membership now stands at 32, although several non-members came to some meetings. At the group's last AGM it was agreed that it would still be called Ladies Fellowship. Gentlemen would still be welcomed to open meetings. Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of every month usually in St. Peter's Centre at 7.30pm. In the past year there has been an eclectic programme of events, ranging from a photographic walk through Whistley Wood, to Tom Partridge-Underwood, who made us all laugh with his anecdotes of his time as Mayor of Wellingborough. We returned to the Royal Oak for a meal in November, chosen because of its convenience and, of course, for the warm welcome and delicious food.

A group of members, with some partners, enjoyed a sunny wine tasting at Earls Barton Vineyard. The weather wasn't always so kind. The annual fund raiser, this time for the Children's Society was hindered

by dreadful wind and rain. We still managed to send a cheque for £220 to them. Snow and ice almost cancelled the Santa beetle drive in December. It was relocated to the Village Hall and 12 hardy ladies enjoyed a fun session. Thanks must go to Elizabeth for arranging it and Pam for her delicious cakes.

As previously, members paid £5 a year and £2.50 each meeting they attended, guests paid £3. The estimated income for the year is £550 with predicted expenditure of £586. Because of a healthy financial situation, with a little over £700 in cash and the bank account, the committee has decided to keep the annual subscription for 2018-19 at £5 whilst reducing the meeting fee to £2 for members, non-members would still pay £3. In addition, a cheque for £100 is going to St. Peter's PCC towards their general fund. The Hope Centre will be the Charity we support at the August fund raiser. In future the members will not be asked to provide raffle prizes for monthly meetings. Pam Grove has kindly offered to provide prizes using the Fellowship's funds.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the committee for their support and hard work during the last 3 years and of course the members who make it all worthwhile.

-Report from Cogenhoe Discussion group – Iris Sher

The Discussion Group membership has dropped slightly, two members deciding to be visitors instead. Of course we all miss Janet Deer, particularly me, as she was our Treasurer. Janet was very popular and has left a large gap.

We still meet on the second Monday of every month, in January and June we go out for lunch at the All Seasons Cafe.

The programme over the past year was, as usual, a mix of discussions with subjects ranging from "Interesting items spotted in newspapers and magazine cuttings", to "Our Ideal Day", and we had speakers highlighting aspects of the work of the National Trust, the original ideal behind "The Daily Bread" shop a talk about the history of Turkey, which, in history, was known as Mesopotamia, Richard Deacon gave an illustrated talk on the lives of the women who went to the Yukon as part of the "Gold Rush". This month our old friend Kathie Lynch came to tell us about her fifty years in the Keep Fit Association, putting on a CD and persuading us into chair exercises. Very helpful, we should all go home and practice. We run modest raffles and so far each year have sent £100 to our charity, the Air Ambulance.

-Report from the Heritage Society - Peter Alexander, Chairman,

The Cogenhoe & Whiston Heritage Society has undergone some significant changes in 2017 and 2018. At the AGM in March 2017, the long serving Chairman Ted Barnes announced his resignation as he was moving out of the immediate area. He was succeeded by Richard Deacon, the Vice Chairman, but for one year only as he was also moving from Cogenhoe. Richard resigned at the AGM held in March 2018 and that is why I am giving this presentation to you today, being the new Chairman.

The Society has two current projects, namely the Green Plaque Scheme and the Cogenhoe Map project.

Green Plaque Scheme.

The 13 plaques that are to be fitted on designated premises in the village have now arrived. So, after several years of background work, Richard Deacon will celebrate the official launch of the final stage of the project on Thursday, 7th. June 2018. The venue will be the village green where a plaque will be unveiled that will eventually be attached to the Old School House, 51, Church Street. The remaining plaques will be fitted in association with the owners of the premises and at their convenience. A leaflet is being produced that will accompany the unveiling and will give brief details of the historical reason behind each plaque and where the property is situated. The format of the leaflet which is for the benefit of visitors and locals has nearly been finalised.

The Map Project.

This will record the history of Cogenhoe in map form, from early maps up to the present day. Ted Barnes is leading this project with a small team and significant progress has been made but more work is still to be

carried out as new information is coming to the team's attention. At the moment I am unable to give any indication as to when this project will be completed.

The Future.

After the two current projects have been completed there are no plans for any future projects. However, should any suggestions be forthcoming, the committee will give the proposal due consideration.

The finances of the society remain satisfactory and the return of the raffle has helped the society to increase revenue at a time of rising costs. The main income stream is from our members and the membership, after membership fees have been paid in March 2018 is slightly down from the year before. The drop was slight due to four new members joining in April and May.

The longterm future of the society will only be secured by attracting new members to offset the older members who are no longer with us and those who have moved from the village. We need to attract the 40 + generation and even younger if possible, not only to the Heritage Society but other organisations and functions in the village. This is not a problem just in Cogenhoe but in a lot of villages which are used just as dormitories.

How do we attract these people? This is the challenge for all of us.

9. Open forum

Further comments were made about the need for a bus service for the village, stressing that many of the older residents would forgo their bus passes if a service could be provided.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm

Appendix. Current Condition of each path in the parish

Path Number	Location	Condition
KF1	Cogenhoe Mill to Pack Horse Bridge	Clear
KF2	Mill Lane to Cogenhoe Mill across the field	Clear
KF3	Tarmac road to Cogenhoe Mill	Clear
KF4	Mill Lane bend across field to Whiston Lock	Path clear but rape growing high
KF5	Rear of houses in Mill Lane to join KF12	Clear at rear of houses but overgrown in the field
KF6	Unused	
KF7	Unused	
KF8	Unused	
KF9	Mill Lane bend to Whiston Road passing rear of Roe Farm	Work in progress at rear of Roe Farm. Definitive path crosses a stream where it is impassable due to nettles and vegetation. There is a bypass available.
KF10	Whiston Road to Whiston Village	Cogenhoe end is overgrown with nettles but is accessible
KF11	From KF5 to KF12	Completely overgrown so is invisible. Unimportant as it just cuts off a corner.
KF12	Bridleway from Mill Lane bend to Whiston Spinney near Nat's Barn	The longest Bridleway in the parish, it is overgrown in places but is mostly clear.
KF13	From Whiston Spinney to the parish boundary crossing the Whiston to Denton Road	Clear
KF14	From parish boundary at Brafield where it joins KC10 (Brafield parish path) past Nat's Barn for a short distance by Whiston Spinney	The crop is high but the path is clear.
KF15	Church Street to The Piece	Clear but some overhanging trees
KF16	Playing Field to Parish boundary at the rear of Compton Park	Clear
KF17	Short Lane to junction with KF30 and KC12 (Brafield parish path)	Clear. Although this is a footpath NOT a bridleway, horses use it causing damage and potholes.
KF18	Whiston Churchyard to Whiston Village	Clear
KF19	Short path from Whiston Lock to the parish boundary towards Earls Barton	Clear
KF20	Whiston Lock to Whiston Turn	Clear
KF21	Near Whiston Slade Farm alongside a stream to the parish boundary near Chadstone	Very overgrown and not clearly marked.
KF22	From Whiston Slade Farm to parish boundary near Denton to connect with KF21	Clear across field from the farm but not marked at field edge.
KF23	Rear of Whiston Church to Whiston Village	Follows field edge to Manor Farm but there is no access point to the village.so it is unusable.
KF24	Whiston to Denton Road to Whiston Slade Farm	Forms driveway to the farm. There is an electrically operated gate but access to the path is over a stile by the road.
KF25	From Junction of KF13 and KF14, over the ford to Whiston Village	Clear
KF26	Connecting path from Station Road to Orchard Way	Clear
KF27	From Whiston Road at KF12 to the top of Jerusalem Steps	Clear
KF28	From the sharp bend on KF12 through The Firs to the bridge at the end of KF13	Clear
KF29	From the ford at the end of the Pocket Park across the stream to join KF16 as it crosses the field between the Playing Field and Compton Park	Clear. The original waymarker posts have been removed.
KF30	From the top of KF17 to Nat's Barn	Clear