

Cosgrove Parish Council

MINUTES OF COSGROVE ANNUAL OPEN MEETING

Held on 28th April 2009 at the Village Hall, Bridge Road commencing at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs AG Hickie (in the chair), Mr A Bracey, Mrs J Childs, Mr R Gibbs, Mr J Roberts, Mr C Stokes & Mrs J Storey;

Also present were Cllr Mr I McCord (SNC), Mr A Walker (NCC), PC M Wallace (Northants Police) and members of the public

1. Apologies

Cllrs Mrs H Harbottle & Mr D Smith

2. Minutes of the 2008 Annual Open Meeting (previously displayed n/b)

Previously circulated and signed as a correct record at the May 2008 meeting

3. Matter Arising

No matters arising

4. Petitioners or Questions from Electors (required in writing by 12 noon 28th April

None

5. Adoption of Accounts

The clerk (RFO) outlined budget controls

- | | | |
|-----|--|------------------------------------|
| (a) | To receive Audited Accounts 2007 / 2008 | } No comments and formally adopted |
| (b) | Accounts for Audit 2008 / 2009 | } Approved |
| (c) | Budget Proposals 2009 / 2010 | } Approved without comment |

6. Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked all members of the Parish Council, and, in particular, the Clerk, for all the hard work they had put in over the past year.

He made comment that

- With little feedback, he assumed that the residents of Cosgrove were happy with the work done on their behalf by the Parish Council
- It had been a satisfactory year with, in particular:

The legal requirement to vouchsafe future burial facilities had, after many years of negotiation, been concluded with land generously being donated by Mr Miller, of Cosgrove Hall, and while the legal costs were greater than expected adequate funds had been set aside

A bus shelter has been built and looks very fine. On behalf of the Council and Cosgrove he thanked Mr Colin Styles, who built the shelter, for his assistance

Even with the above expenditures the Council was still solvent

7. Report by Northamptonshire Police

PC Mike Wallace spoke about the changes in the Safe Community Policing and produced the following crime statistics:

Crime figures from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 were as follows:

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Violence | 3 > 4 | |
| Burglary Dwelling | 1 > 1 | |
| Burglary Other | 4 > 2 | <i>(from garages and sheds)</i> |

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Theft from M/V</i> | <i>4 > 3</i> |
| <i>Theft of M/V</i> | <i>2 > 0</i> |
| <i>Veh Interference</i> | <i>0 > 0</i> |
| <i>Veh Damage</i> | <i>1 > 0</i> |
| <i>Criminal Damage</i> | <i>2 > 5</i> |
| <i>Drugs</i> | <i>0 > 0</i> |
| <i>Theft (Other)</i> | <i>6 > 3</i> |

Total Crimes 18 (a further reduction on last years 24)

It was evident that Caravan Park continued to have less impact on figures since the removal of day visitors and Neighbourhood Watches were important

PC Wallace : 08453 700 700 E-mail northantspolice@mailroom@northants.police.uk

After Q about m/cycle speed enforcement especially at weekends when the A508 / A422 and A5 were being used as racetracks and the noise nuisance was sometimes intolerable. His answer on policing policy was Q and the clerk was to write in the form of a complaint. The Caravan Park and Pub Watch (B32 Landlord based support) was also discussed. With no further Qs PC Wallace was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

8. Report / Questions for District Councillor

Cllr McCord submitted the following report:

We live in interesting times. The past year on SNC has been one of challenges mainly financial.

The one ahead looks no less of tough year either.

In order to balance the books financially it was necessary to use just short of £1m of reserves. That I supported on the principle that if you have savings for a rainy day, without doubt it is pouring down in an economic sense.

The long term reliance on this source of funding is cannot be sustained and so the need to get more efficiency savings and make some tough decisions has not gone away.

Some issues are beyond SNC like the Public sector pension fund. SNC pension costs are 20% of salary. With total cost of employment at almost 30%. Next year there will be a new actuarial review, that will likely increase the strain on the finances still further. This needs urgent action by central government.

Another major challenge that lies ahead is the housing and growth plans. We must deliver planning permission for 330 homes per year across the district on a rolling 5 year total. Shortfalls from one year get carried over to the next. At any point in time we need to have 1800+ planning permissions that are likely to be delivered in 5 years.

SNC does not. The land bank is something like 3.27 years. The government central planning guidance says that if you don't have the 5 year land bank there should be a presumption in favour of applicants. Two recent appeals in Pottersbury and Cosgrove have been successfully won by the developers using these arguments.

It is as a result of this that the Council is consulting on the Interim Rural Housing Policy. I hope you all have a chance to read this and make comments. My personal view, and given the Cosgrove appeal, is that the burden should be shared thinner and wider. I would rather fewer houses in more villages. Say 7% in the larger villages with 3% in the smaller ones.

SNC continues to perform reasonably well. The Audit commission in their recent letter to members gave SNC a full house of 3 out of 4 for value for money, use of resources, and financial control – this was the best in the County.

The waste performance continues to improve also, and I wish to place my thanks to you who make it possible. SNC is one of the top performing in the country having risen to 29th place in the whole country. Recycling 47% of all waste collected.

On a personal perspective I wish to record my thanks to you all for your help and support. Life is so much easier with functioning Parish Councils. I shall continue to raise matters on your behalf in the Council and to try to keep you all informed via email when I can.

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Cllr McCord answered a number of Qs and remained

9. Report by County Councillor

Cllr Walker submitted the following report :

Cllr Walker covers Deanshanger, Cosgrove, Old Stratford, Potterspury, Whittlebury, Wicken & Yardley Gobion

He spoke about the last 4 years of Conservative Administration which had improved the lifestyle of Northants residents that he was elected to represent

Money had been allocated towards more CPSOs. Further reviews of NCC and a new CXO had made a marked difference at NCC and in addition, had saved some £40M per year after a more businesslike approach had been adopted. A new Highways Contractor May Gurney (MGWSP) had been appointed 2008 and NCC had gone back to Area Operating. Council tax had been set at 3.9% the lowest Band D in England without cutting services and further efficiencies may mean another neutral budget in this County Election Year

He was Chair of the renamed Customer & Communities Scrutiny Committee (using working groups to deal with Waste Management (NCC/MK partnership); Review of Voluntary Services and the Local Transport Plan). He also chaired an NCC/MKC wide forum on Alcohol Abuse and is still an appointed Director of EM Fire Service Control Centre. He champions Trading Standards nationally for NCC and is involved in SCAM busters and setting up of Cold Calling Zones and the Scrutiny of the Empowering County Councillors Scheme (money to local groups) to ensure value for money.

He has personally made £20,000 in 2 years available for local organisation including £1,200 towards the construction of the new bus shelter

He also listed his activities locally, was Chair of Kingsbrook Business College governing body (who were in the process of appointing a new Head Teacher), his response to parishioner Qs and the satisfaction level was 98.5%.

He thanked the clerk and Cosgrove Councillors and with no Qs remained

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10. Any Other Business

None

With no other business the meeting closed at 7.32pm