

## **Nettleton Parish Council**

### **Chairman's Report for the year May 2018 to April 2019**

#### **1. Introduction**

This report provides a brief overview of the Parish Council's activities during the year. We will be pleased to provide more detail if requested and questions will be most welcome at, before or after the Annual Parish Meeting (7.30pm at St Mary's Church, Burton, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019).

#### **2. Parish Council**

The members of the Parish Council (PC) during the year were:

David Kerr (Chairman); Jenny Minney (Vice-Chair); Stephen Beare; Jeanne Bush; Jane Futrell; Chris Meier; Matt Newman; Julie O'Shea; John Wright.

The Clerk is Sheila Parker.

#### **3. Objectives for the Year**

The PC has a Business Plan which is published on the parish council website to assist in the organisation of the Council's business for the year and to establish priorities against which the performance of the Council can be assessed. The main topics are covered in this report.

#### **4. Planning Applications**

18 Planning Applications were reviewed by the Parish Council (PC) in the year and responses and formal comments provided to Wiltshire Council (WC).

The applications included:

- A new farmhouse at Westfield Farm for the new farming enterprise, which the PC supported.
- A proposed new house on a green field site in Nettleton. This proposal raised some concerns from residents of Nettleton, as it could not be classed as "infill". The PC asked for it to be called in to WC planning committee whose decision was to refuse the application.
- Conversions of barns to residential use in Nettleton and in West Kington. A key planning issue for these is whether they are then permitted to be sold as separate properties.
- Various applications for extensions to existing properties.
- Felling of protected trees.

#### **5. Parish Housing Needs Survey**

This survey was carried out on behalf of the parish council by Wiltshire Council. The report is available on the PC website. The main result of the survey is that there is no case for the parish council to promote community housing. A key point noted in the report is the lack of 1-2 bedroom houses in the parish. It appears that part of the reason for this is that some small houses have been extended to make much larger houses in recent years.

#### **6. Wiltshire Council Consultations & Meetings**

The Parish Council has not responded to any Wiltshire Council consultations in the last year.

The Wiltshire Council Chippenham Area Board meets every two months to consider matters affecting the area and to decide on applications for grants. A PC representative attends when appropriate.

The Parish Forum is an informal meeting of the Parishes in the Chippenham rural area which meets every 2 months. The meetings are attended by a PC representative, as these meetings are an excellent means of comparing experience on local issues. Issues addressed in the last year have included:

- Fly tipping and measures to address it: WC have emphasised the importance of reporting fly tipping promptly on the WC app. Residents are asked not to touch fly tipped material, as this could prejudice prosecution. The potential use of portable CCTV has being investigated and agreed in principle.

- Data Protection Regulations: Views were exchanged on how to address the new requirements in a simple and cost effective way. NPC have since put in place some procedures to meet the regulations in a simple and least cost manner.

## 7. Highways Safety Issues

The Parish Council has responded to concerns of residents about road safety issues at four locations in this year. Wiltshire Council process for dealing with these issues is to refer them to the Community Area Traffic Group (CATG), which can be attended by PC representatives. The PC has to contribute 25% of the cost of agreed measures.

- School pick-up & drop off at the triangle, Burton: A meeting was held recently with WC highways officer. Ideas discussed and considered feasible include moving the 30 mph signs to South of the Play Area, new signage on the road and remarking all white lines. These proposals will be considered at the CATG meeting in June.
- Fosse Way, location known as “Deadman’s Hill”: Following further accidents on this dangerous section of Fosse Way, another application has been made to WC to consider further measures improve safety. Rumble strips, favoured by the PC, are not acceptable to WC because of noise concerns but white lines across the road on the approaches are proposed to alert drivers to the signage. This will be considered at the CATG meeting in June.
- Hillside, Burton: The Hillside section of the B4039 road has no footpath and has been a serious safety hazard to pedestrians for many years. New signs were requested by the parish council to warn drivers of potential for pedestrians in the road and they were approved and installed earlier this year. A scheme to construct a footpath using adjacent private land over part of this length of road was investigated last year but proved not feasible at present.
- Cross Roads on Tormarton to Marshfield Road, known as “Gypsy Cross Roads”: Following a fatal accident at this crossroads in 2018, NPC liaised with Tormarton PC to propose measures to South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) to improve safety. Two of these measures have now been implemented (improved signage and the removal of large cypress trees) but one is still being considered by SGC (speed limit on the Tormarton to Marshfield road).

## 8. Snow and Ice Precautions

The parish snow plan, under which a local farmer has a contract from WC to clear the roads in the parish when requested by the PC, was put into action again this year following a snowfall in February and was considered by residents to have worked well. The PC is also responsible for the salt bins around the parish. The bins are checked before the winter by councillors in each village and re-filling is arranged as required.

## 9. Highways Maintenance

Guidance on their arrangements has been provided by Wiltshire Council, of which the main point is that WC expects the rural community to report highway maintenance issues such as potholes, serious flooding and fly tipping via MyWiltshire on line at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywilts](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywilts). This can be done by;

- Using the MyWiltshire app on a smart phone.
- By telephone on 0300 456 0105.

Also, it is helpful if the issue is reported to a parish councillor so that the PC is aware of it.

The parish steward can be asked by the PC to clear highway drainage grips, trimming encroaching hedges, cleaning/straightening road signs, weed spraying, etc. The lead councillor for highways, Cllr Stephen Beare, is responsible for liaison with the parish steward.

Over the past 12 months the PC has continued to work closely with WC to resolve various recurrent and longstanding issues. Outstanding issues at present are:

- Re-marking of faded white lines at various road junctions in each village in the parish. This includes Drifton Hill / Smith Street junction in West Kington, Nettleton Road / Manor Farm Road junction in Nettleton and the school bus pick-up location at the grass triangle in Burton.

The lack of clear markings is a road safety concern and the PC has received many reports of near misses by residents. WC have advised that the re-marking will be done this year.

- Completion of installation of road drainage gullies near Brook Farm in West Kington. This is needed to resolve a longstanding flooding issue.

#### **10. Flooding**

The PC has continued to liaise with the Environment Agency (EA) and WC on flooding issues through attendance at the WC Flood Group meetings. The modelling by the EA of the catchment areas of The Broadmead and the Burton Brook (completed in 2017) confirmed that some properties in Burton are at risk of flooding from Burton Brook due to extreme rainfall combined with surface water flooding, if the Brook is not kept reasonably clear of vegetation. Burton Brook was cleared of vegetation and silt through Burton last year by WC at the PC request. The clearance is the responsibility of land owners.

The EA have said that funding will be made available for property level protection. However, this has been delayed by a requirement for the UK wide contract to be advertised under EU rules!

#### **11. Broadband**

**Broadband:** A broadband service (installed by BT Openreach) is now finally available to most properties in Nettleton and West Kington. The service is still not “super-fast” in some areas but at least it is no longer “super-slow”!

**Gigaclear:** This company has a contract from WC to install super-fast Broadband to the property boundary. Work is expected to start in Nettleton and West Kington in 2020. The PC has met with Gigaclear’s community liaison officer and have been assured that Gigaclear will liaise with the PC and residents before work commences.

#### **12. Parish Council Website**

The Parish Council website that was set up last year has now been operating since June 2018 and is working well. All PC documents are available on the website and there are links to planning applications on WC website.

#### **13. Precept and Finance**

The annual precept for 2018-19 received by the PC was £6,000. The disposable income, after essential costs are met, is about £2000 per year. The end of year accounts for 2017-18 showed a balance of £11,000 and there was a discussion as to whether this is too high and whether the precept for the year 2019-20 should be reduced. However after discussion, it was agreed that the precept should remain at £6,000 because of potential highways projects which the parish would need to contribute to, plus the continuing uncertainty regarding budget cuts by WC which could result in the parish having to fund some work currently carried out by WC.

*David Kerr, Chairman*

*April 2019*

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