

North Luffenham Parish Council - Chairman's Report for Financial Year 2016-17

Introduction

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 7.30 on Monday 3rd April 2017 in the Community Centre. Whilst this brief summary highlights the work of the Parish Council over the past year, I do hope that you will be able to join us at the Parish Meeting to hear more of our plans for the future and to have your say on those Parish issues that are important to you.

You may recall that last year the Parish Council identified a number of key principles that should guide its work in particular a need for strong governance, accountability and communication. In all of our business, we have tried to maintain and develop these ideas with the aim of continually improving our service to the village. Work on our Governance Review continues and every aspect of our business as both Parish Council and Trustee of the Recreation Ground and Field Gardens Charities is being examined to ensure that we are following appropriate guidelines and best practice. This has included the publication and on-going implementation of new Financial Regulations.

Routine Parish Council Business

Road Safety. The PC continues to work closely with County Councillors Bool and Waller and the County Council to improve road safety throughout the village. It has been agreed that a reduced (30 MPH) Speed Limit will be introduced on Edith Weston Road. The provision of radar operated Speed Indicator Signs on Edith Weston Road has been agreed and funded and should be implemented shortly. The School has designed new road safety signs that have been erected. We continue to monitor Road Safety during School Drop Off / Pick Up times. We have liaised closely with the Headmistress, Police and RCC Highways to try and establish how best to manage this problem. There is no simple solution and much depends on the willingness of parents to conform to the guidance given. The issue will be continually reviewed.

Village Information Booklet / Welcome pack. A new Village Information Booklet and Welcome Pack have been developed and the Booklet will shortly be delivered to every household. We will endeavor to deliver a pack to all new households on arrival

LEAP (Local Equipped Area of Play) Contribution. The sum of £40,624 was received from the Rosewood Developer in respect of the Rosewood development in 2016. The Parish Council have conducted a detailed review of what equipment is needed, which has included consultation with parents/young people. A formal proposal to initially purchase a climbing frame, a cradle swing and a zip wire has been considered and approval is now being sought from the County Council for their installation on the Oval. A decision to purchase a skate ramp remains under consideration, but more work is needed on this. The Parish Council has agreed to fund the refurbishment of the existing play equipment in the coming financial year.

Training. A high priority has been placed on ensuring that the PC is fully trained and understands its statutory responsibilities and the limitation of its authority. Collective Councillor training has been completed and we continue to seek appropriate training for the Council and the Clerk wherever necessary.

Planning Committee. Following last year's review of procedures, all contentious planning issues are now considered at a public forum, either through the Planning Committee or an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council. This commitment to consult broadly and listen to local concerns has allowed the Planning Committee to develop its understanding of key local planning issues.

Data Protection. The PC has reviewed its data protection policy and processes and is now formally registered with the Information Commission

As Trustee of the Village Charity Land (The Oval and Field Gardens)

Village Walkway – Adoption of the permissive pathway off Edith Weston Road to the West of the Village has ensured clarity of the status of the walkway and ensured that a Right of Way was not inadvertently created. The walkway is now open to all – but do please clear up after your dogs.

Allotments. The majority of allotments continue to be fully utilised, though a small number are available for letting (Contact: Charles Cade: 01780 720467). All allotment holders have now joined the National Allotments Society and have purchased appropriate 3rd Party insurance cover.

Charitable Grants

Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory expenditure. It is under this provision that the Parish Council may make any payment or gift to an organisation for a specific purpose that will benefit the Parish, or residents of the Parish, and which is not directly controlled or administered by the Parish Council. Under this provision in FY15/16 the PC made a grant to Rutland CAB of £100. A further grant of £500, under Section 214 (6), has been made to North Luffenham PCC to help cover the cost of maintenance of the churchyard.

Village Day 2016

Many thanks to everyone that contributed to the success of village day on 11 Jun 16. The High Sherriff summed up the day, "I am proud that Rutland can put on such a demonstration of community spirit. It is just what England is great at – certainly North Luffenham is."

Budget Requirement From RCC (Precept And Local Council Tax Support Grant)

For FY16/17 the Local Council Tax Support Grant, which had been £426, has been withdrawn. Notwithstanding this loss of income, it was decided that the FY17/18 precept should be held at the FY15/16 level of £9,203. It has been agreed that additional one-off expenditure of up to £5,000 to fund play area maintenance will be taken from reserves.

North Luffenham Village Plan

The Parish Council has identified that to enable it to make strategic decisions about the development of the village and to manage its' day to day business and meet the aspirations of villagers, it is important that a Village Plan be developed. The type of issues to be considered will include: environment; planning / development; transport and roads; recreational facilities; health; community issues; education; community safety; volunteers; senior citizens; youth / youth activities and any other issues considered relevant. We live in a beautiful place and our plan is likely to concentrate on how we can protect its character, influence any future proposed development and where appropriate enhance its facilities. The first stage in creating the plan is to better understand the wishes and perceptions of villagers of all ages. A questionnaire has been developed and hard copies will be delivered in early April to all houses in the Parish, for completion by each occupant. In addition, an e-version will be available through the Village Web Site. Details will be included on how to return the form and to whom questions may be addressed. I do hope that you will take this opportunity to have a say in the future development of the village. We look forward to hearing from you.

Parish Clerk

Following the retirement of Ian Ferguson as Parish Clerk in July last year, I am delighted to report that Mrs Angela Ashpole has been appointed and trained. She is doing a sterling job and settled in well to what is a challenging and busy appointment. I am delighted to confirm that through the Government's transparency funding we have been able to purchase new IT equipment to help her to do her job efficiently.

This has been a challenging and interesting year for the Parish Council and much has been achieved. This short report attempts to encapsulate the work of the Parish Council over the past year, to find out more about our work please come to the Parish Meeting on 3rd April, or any of Parish Council meetings. Your input is invaluable to us, your elected representatives.

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