

**SPRATTON PARISH  
COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2018/19**

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT MAY 2019**

It's hard to pick the most important events of the year that have had an impact on the parish or in which the Parish Council has been active. Some, such as the planned cancellation of the No 60 bus route from Northampton to Welford or the consideration of paying a share in our own Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), were in the early stages of negotiations and some like the postponement of the Local Elections due in May 2019 were out of our control. The Local Elections will now take place in May 2020 because in November 2018 the Secretary of State for Local Government, James Brokenshire MP, announced that the government consultation on the proposed reorganisation of local government in the county finally would take place before January 2019. As everyone will know, we succeeded in negotiating a shared PCSO and saving the buses, at least for a further year.

### Local Government Changes

Most people will be aware of the changes to the two tier system of local government. In our case Daventry District Council deal with matters such as Planning, litter picking, rubbish collection etc and the Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) deal with things like adult social services, children, highways, education etc. From 2020 all matters will be dealt with by just two unitary authorities for two areas which were previously dealt with under seven different authorities. One of the unitary councils will be West Northamptonshire, comprising the current area of Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire;. The other will be North Northamptonshire, comprising the current areas of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough.

NCC seems to be coping with the "bankruptcy" matter well and it is hoped that when the new system comes into being, the government will ensure that the new Unitaries will not suffer a reduction in funding because of the NCC debt.

### The Youth Club

During the year the Youth Club unfortunately had to close through lack of parents and volunteers to run it. However many thanks from the village must go to the four hard working volunteers who ran it to the end who were Jenny Tilley, Garry Ashton, Emma Clements and Karen Green. Special thanks to Jenny and Garry who kept it going so successfully from the beginning. The good news is that the Youth Club is starting again. The Parish Council has paid for the Clubs for Young People Northamptonshire (CYPN) to look in to the need and viability of a new youth club and after a very successful taster session in March the Parish Council has agreed to finance a monthly club on the last Thursday of the month to be run between 6.00-7.30pm by CYPN, venue to be decided. .

### East View Cemetery

For many years there have been request for a water supply in the cemetery for relatives to water flower around graves. The Parish Council explored various options which did not work but out of the blue came on option which did work. George Matts was putting some water pipes across his field to provide water for his stock so very kindly he offered to put a pipe across to the cemetery from his supply and install a water tank with a ball cock to stop overflowing. So there is now a perfect trough to the right of the gate by the hedge as you walk in and a big thank to George for his magnanimous gesture for the village! George's only request is that visitors keep an eye on it to make sure that there is no problem causing any loss of water and if any is spotted to let him know (or a member of the Parish Council).

### The Millennium Garden

You may have noticed that things are looking up in the garden. The overhanging trees have been trimmed to allow more light in to the area; thanks to Hazel Peterson, the two planting areas have new bright beds in them with wood chip to prevent weeds, the refuse bin has been moved to nearer to the footpath and a smaller pot for litter left by the seat and finally the Parish Council is looking at various options for a new seat to replace the one on the right. The one on the left is to be removed to allow for the memorial sign at the base of the Walnut tree to be uncovered as the seat is on top of it.

### The Telephone Box

Following the painting of the box, a local carpenter, James Plant of Crown Building & Carpentry is putting in shelves so we will have a phone box ready to be filled with books or other things of interest to be loaned, given or swapped. Please contact the clerk or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to contribute in any way.

### The Closure of Brixworth Road

The footpath up to the church opposite Saul's was in need of repair and the supporting wall needed some attention. Pointing has been carried out and the small bulge at the top has been back filled with concrete as well as the path itself being maintained. The bulge towards the bottom of the slope has been left as it was not considered by the County Council to be unsafe and will be repaired when money is available.

The pillar at the top of path has been removed and temporarily replaced with a fence as it was unsafe. As the pillar is part of the Grade 1 Listed Church retrospective planning permission is being applied for as well as the necessary consents so it may be a while before the pillar is replaced. The main church wall is to be examined and repaired where necessary so hopefully will be safe for some time to come though a sudden collapse as experienced when a mower was being used on the edge in 2008, can never be ruled out what ever remedial work is done.

Joan Tice

This small piece can never hope to express the gratitude and respect that so many people have for Mrs Joan Tice who peacefully passed away in the presence of her friends and family on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019. She was such a good friend to this village that she will always be remembered for her generosity in helping projects and individuals as well as supporting the local businesses. Joan allowed people, dogs and horses to use the Gallops, granting a 1 ½ mile footpath from Spratton to Teeton (We call Tice Way ) and walking it with so many of us on the day it was opened, the right to plant a community wood, called Jubilee Wood on her land, as well as many other kindnesses which may or may not be generally known.

She was rightly awarded an OBE for services to charitable works with horses in 2015. She loved horses and bred many successful point to pointers and enjoyed attending the meetings. She was Master of the Pytchley Hunt for many years and hosted a meet at her home each year. The Pytchley Hunt Pony Club Summer Camp was held at Teeton Hall every year and Joan liked to help provide all the necessities even including the cooked breakfasts! She had been a trustee of the Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation established by her father in 1960 and first became a trustee in 1967. The Foundation, with Joan's support, was kind enough to support our local Riding for the Disabled Group which meets at Holdenby.

Her funeral will take place at Guilsborough church on 17<sup>th</sup> May at 3pm.

May she rest in peace.

## **SPRATTON PARISH COUNCIL 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019**

### **PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Once again the past year has been a busy year for the planning committee.

Numerous applications have been submitted to Daventry District Council from this Parish all of which are considered by the Committee.

Much consideration is given to every application that comes before the Committee paying particular attention to the Spratton Neighbourhood plan and also to the wider policies of Daventry District Council Local Plan and the West Northampton Core Strategy.

Each application is considered on its merits and whether it falls within the above criteria for development and our decisions are based on what we believe to be for the benefit of the village and its residents.

Naturally by the very nature of a planning application people's views on the advantages and disadvantages of an application are diverse and can create strong feelings. As a Council we listen carefully to all points of view in order to reach a decision on how to respond to the application before us.

We know we will not please all of the people all of the time but we do our best to reach fair decisions.

Once we have submitted our opinion to Daventry District Council the final decision is left to their planning department or committee. A representative of the Parish Council has attended such meetings when it has felt appropriate to do so to voice the opinion of the Council to the Planning Committee of Daventry District Council.

Finally, if you are aware of a planning application that may affect you or the village on which you have views that you wish to express, then please look at the Parish Council website and/or notice board which will advise you when the application is being considered by the Council and come along to express your views so that they can be considered when making our decision.

## **SPRATTON PARISH COUNCIL 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019**

### **HIGHWAYS ADVISORY GROUP REPORT**

There have been many highways related issues for the group to deal with this year. Everything from our old friend the bridge being hit again, speeding, the no.60 bus route, overhanging trees, grit bins and street lighting to name but a few.

We recognise that the No.60 bus route is a very important service for many of our parishioners and after many months of negotiating and persuasion Cllr Hunt has managed to organise the parishes along the route to collaborate and contribute to the subsidy required to make it a viable commercial proposition and so it will continue to be for another year – great news!

Speeding in the village is a concern and to try and address this we are in the process of repairing the current sign sited on Brixworth road and will be purchasing two new state of the art solar speed cameras which can be placed at speeding hotspots and be moved around when required. These will advise drivers of their speed and record data of vehicles in both directions that we can use in the future when discussing the issue with the relevant authorities.

We have been in contact with NCC this year regarding trimming back the overhanging trees in Holdenby road which was highlighted to the Council as a concern due to them striking the school bus. They also advised us late last year that they would no longer be supporting the grit bin in Smith street adjacent to the recreation ground. We feel that this is an important resource for the residents and so have adopted the maintenance and re-filling of it via our mowing contractors.

And finally, street lighting. All faults are being reported promptly to our contractor however some repairs are taking longer than we would expect. They are being chased on a regular basis and their performance is being monitored.

We will continue to work hard for the parish and are always open to the views of our Parishioners, so if you have any ideas please come along to the meetings and let us know.

## **Resources (Staffing and Strategy) Committee Report 2018/19**

### **Finances**

This has been an uncertain year in the Government again as well as the Local Authority and still many unknowns as to how changes and budget cuts will impact Local Authorities and consequently Parish Councils. We decided that the precept should be increased for this last financial year on the basis of some financial responsibilities being passed from the LA to SPC, cuts in gritting, together with pre-empting some potential further cuts to leave us with some contingency in place. The precept was not raised for this current financial year.

Cllr Hunt's (Chair) efforts and persistence has secured a grant to fund more than half of the required sum for the Route 60 bus to continue for another year, with the remainder then a more affordable sum for the Parishes on the route, most of which have agreed to contribute fully.

CIL payments from the development off Brixworth Road have been received and have provided additional funds to the precept, covering the PCSO contribution from SPC and shall also be used for the purchase of two new speed control signs as well as the SPC bus contribution.

We (thanks to our Clerk for applying) have been awarded £1000 from Tesco Bags of Help which shall partially go towards fitting out the village phone box adopted by the Parish Council with shelving.

All banking transactions can now be carried out by internet or phone and we are planning to move entirely away from cheque payments to improve efficiencies both in cost and time.

Our budget review for the next financial year is healthy with a good reserve in place and funds allocated for supporting organisations such as reinstatement of the youth club, street lighting replacement/upgrades and an allocated contingency for PC responsibilities such as the church wall.

### **Audit**

Internal audit was carried out at the end of April by NCALC and all was approved. They stated that they *'were able to access a well ordered set of documents and records'* and they were *'Satisfied that effective policies and procedures together with systems to manage, monitor and control the Council's business are in place.'*

This all a credit to Emma our Clerk for her on going efforts.

They noted that *'The Council needs to actively recruit new Councillors'* which is something we have and must continue to work on.

### **New Councillors**

We unfortunately have a much-reduced Council over the last 6 months or so with the resignation of some long-standing Councillors for various reasons, including, more recently, Mrs Jay Tindale who has been on the Council for many years heading up the resources committee. Her efforts over the years are much appreciated. We have recently welcomed Councillor Denise Fry. We feel we have a strong committed Council providing a range of knowledge, expertise and views. We would like to attract more applicants to compliment the current dynamic to aid in the decision making for the benefit of the village.

Please contact the Clerk if you might be interested in joining the Parish Council.