

NORTHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held at 7.30pm at Swarraton and Northington Village Hall on Tuesday 3rd May 2011

Present: Cllr Neil Baxter, Cllr Jackie Porter, Mr Roger Brooke (Chairman), Mr Robert Bryant, Mrs Monica Nightingale, Mr John Mitchell, Mrs Fleur Rutherford, Mr Simon Walker, Mrs Rhona Hatchley (Clerk) and 30 residents.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed our County and District Councillors. Cllr Neil Baxter, who is shortly to retire, was warmly thanked for his support as was Mr Robert Bryant who has recently stepped down from the Parish Council after eight years. New Parish Council members Fleur Rutherford, Simon Walker and Rhona Hatchley were introduced and welcomed.

1. The Chairman reported on progress with the reduction to 30mph of the **speed limit on the B3046** between Swarraton Farm and The Woolpack Inn. Cllr Porter has made strenuous efforts on our behalf to bring this about. Without a footpath, the road is very dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists, and riders alike and two residents gave examples of accidents that had happened on or adjacent to their properties. Unfortunately the matter was 32nd on the list for the A & B road review! A resolution was proposed to resolve this and carried unanimously. The Chairman said he had enlisted the support of Grange Park Opera and would be writing personally to Chief Constable Alex Marshall to put our case.

2. Secondly, the Chairman presented his **Blueprint Report** based on residents' responses to a questionnaire circulated at the meeting in November. If the Localism Bill is passed in parliament, there is a strong possibility that Parish Councils will have greater influence on future planning decisions. The Chairman would be very happy to hear from any residents who have plans for building or redevelopment in the villages to see if and how we could help (a full copy of his report is available from the Clerk). The planning application for the Totford Sawmills which has recently been rejected was discussed as was the potential for development of Grange Farm.

3. Lastly, the Chairman reported that the regeneration of the Iron Age Hill Fort at **Abbotstone Down** was successfully underway and would be a long term project lasting up to ten years. He also commented on the excellent presentation we had just seen from the **Village Hall Committee** on their refurbishment plans and encouraged residents to give it their full support.

4. The Clerk thanked everyone for their email responses to the **Want Faster Broadband** campaign. 69 responses had been received so far by Hampshire County Council from Northington and Swarraton and although no improvement is scheduled for 18 months we are more likely to receive help if we keep campaigning. Any residents who had not yet responded were encouraged to do so. The Clerk also explained plans to update the **Northington Parish Council website**, successfully set up last year. It was suggested that it should include a page for the Village Hall Committee as well as the existing one for the Parish Council. It can be viewed at

<http://communities.hants.gov.uk/northington> and the Clerk would be grateful for any feedback. Finally the Clerk presented the Year End financial report.

5. Cllr Jackie Porter presented her report in which she explained in detail how Council spending cuts were resulting in a major reduction in spending on culture, leisure and care. She also commented that although nothing was yet certain about the Localism Bill, our village Blueprint was clear.

6. Cllr Porter also updated us on the **Blackwood Forest Holiday Development** and the problems presented by such a small area of woodland having so much accommodation and permanent public access. She also described how she was proposing cattle grids at either end of **Oliver's Battery** (Abbotstone Down) to reduce the need for fencing. Also in her report was her emphasis on the need for our vigilance in keeping **travellers** off private land including the reporting of any broken padlocks on the barrier gates.

7. Cllr Neil Baxter reflected on his years with Winchester City Council and the various issues which had arisen in that time such as water management in the Candover Valley and the advent of Grange Park Opera. He also expressed optimism about the Localism Bill given the interest it has generated. He was thanked again for his work on our behalf.

A number of other matters were raised:

8. Dates for the **Queen's Diamond Jubilee** celebrations 2-5 June 2012 were given and it was opened to the residents and Village Hall Committee to think about any village events which they might like to plan.

9. Mr Taylor expressed concern about the management of the **Candover Stream** and members of the council were able to reassure him and other residents that the landowner was working closely with the Environment Agency to do whatever maintenance was allowed.

10. The replacement of Neighbourhood Watch by **Countrywatch** was discussed and the Clerk explained that we are in the Meon Valley North police area for Countrywatch and are part of a Safer Neighbourhood Scheme for the Alresford area. We are encouraged to report any issues via email to countrywatch@hampshhire.pnn.police.uk or by phoning 101.

11. Mrs Parr requested that the condition of the **bus shelter** in the village was looked into as it is becoming unsafe and something might have to be done to prevent accidents.

12. Mrs Longden raised the matter of traffic to and from Grange Park Opera via the main entrance to Grange Park and it was suggested that residents should keep an eye on timing and volume at this early stage in the season.

13. Lastly, the positioning of the blue **grit bins** was discussed. The Parish Council has been following this up closely and Cllr Porter reassured us that the matter was in hand. We should see new bins in our preferred locations on the junction by the village hall and at the end of Church Lane arriving soon.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 9pm.