

COSBY PARISH COUNCIL

The Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Thursday March 17th 2016
in the Cosby Community Church Rooms, Croft Road, Cosby at 7.30pm.

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Present: Mrs J. Chapman. . Chairman.
Mr. S. Pepper, Mr. M. Howkins,
Mr. A. Tanner. Mr. P. Cave, Mr. I. Mullis.
Mr. P. Suffield.
Ms. C. Pharoah, Mrs. E. Hutton,
Mrs. D. Cooper. Mrs. N. Ashby.

Apologies: Mr. L. Phillimore.
Mr. D. Jennings. County Councillor.

Also Present: Mr. G. Anderson. Cosby Village Hall.

Chairman Opens the Meeting:

The Chairman Mrs. Chapman declared the meeting open and welcomed the visitors to the meeting.

Declarations of Interest:

There were none.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2015:

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday March 19th 2015, having been circulated, were taken as read and were proposed by Ms. Pharoah, seconded by Mrs. Hutton as being a true and accurate record of that meeting.
This was agreed unanimously.

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report:

Mrs. Chapman's report, having been previously circulated was taken as read.

This will be my third time as Chair of Cosby Parish Council, which has been, as always very challenging. The year started with the resignation of Margaret Silk, after 27 years as a Parish Councillor.

She was presented with the Garner Cup, as thanks for her loyal service and hard work for the village.

After the uncontested election, we were able to co-opt several new members onto the Council. There are still a number of issues facing us as a village, wishing to retain our unique identity as a community, and a safe environment to live in.

There have been visits to the Council meetings, from a Housing Association, Jelson, who own a lot of land between Cosby and Littlethorpe, and Hewitt's development. These have all shown us that they intend to build new houses in the village, even though according to Blaby District's Local Plan, we have already met our targets.

The development of Coates yard is now completed and work is progressing at The Ridges.

The Council have set up a Planning and Open Spaces Working group to discuss the S106 provision, of extending or enhancing open space in Cosby.

The HGV traffic are using the village as a short cut, even though there is a 7.5 ton weight restriction on the Croft Road, Countesthorpe Road and Cambridge Road, these signs are being blatantly ignored. The increased amount of traffic, particularly at peak times, speeding through, using it as a rat run, at times have caused gridlock. The poor condition and neglect of the road markings, particularly at road junctions and the pedestrian crossings have been reported to the County Council many times. We have been told these will not be attended to until after April due to budget restrictions.

The Christmas lights have been a disappointment to us all this year and a working group has now been set up to look into improvements for 2016.

On a more positive note, the defibrillator has been installed in the red telephone box in The Nook, although you will need a mobile phone to be able to ring East Midlands Ambulance Service. Several villagers have been trained on its use, and, as to when it is appropriate to use it. Many thanks to Mick West for his time given.

The old Pinfold on the Broughton Road has been developed into a Sensory Garden. This has been designed to be suitable for the disabled, with wheelchair access in mind, and is now nearing completion.

The Council has agreed to give some financial support to the Cosby Community Library Group, in the future, when they will have need of assistance. We wish them well in their endeavours to keep the Library open.

As part of an ongoing financial agreement with the Village Hall, the Council support the proposed plans for the enlargement of their sports facilities and provision of female changing rooms.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their varied outlooks and frank discussions at meetings and working groups, all for the good of the village.

Thanks go to District Councillors Alan Tanner and Les Phillimore, County Councillor David Jennings for their valuable input and information given.

My thanks go to the Street orderlies, Theresa Nicholson and David Forty for their continuing hard work to keep the village tidy and litter free. Also my thanks to Alan Barber for his work in the cemetery, and we wish him well for his retirement.

Lastly, I give thanks to our Clerk John Horsburgh, for his wide knowledge and experience in contributing to the smooth running of the Council. John announced in January 2016 that he wishes to retire at the end of October 2016 after 27 years of service to the Council.

Many thanks John for giving us the time to find your replacement, you will be a hard act to follow.

There were no questions to the Chairman as a result of her report.

Financial Reports:

The Clerk reported on the state of the Parish Council finances.

He said that this would be his last financial report to the Council.

The Precept, said the Clerk, had been set at £ 76,850.00 with an amount being made available as the Government Grant to Councils of £ 4,506.00

There had been a 2.5% increase in the Precept said the Clerk but this was still an amount of £ 3,150 less than the figure in 2010.

The Clerk gave details of the Investment that the Council had and the amount of interest that was being received and the maturity date for the investment, which said the Clerk, would then be re-invested for a further period.

The total amount of the Investments amounted to £ 207,180.00 said the Clerk.

The Clerk said that he was confident that the Council's agreed budget would take the Council though to 2017 in a good way and that the hand -over of the Council's assets at the time of his retirement would be infinitely more healthy than when he started 27 years ago.

The Clerk said that he had been reflecting on the financial achievements of the Council during that period and that just to mention three aspects of improvements that had been made in the village. There had been a massive financial commitment to the improvement of the Village Hall and the Cemetery, the Children's Playground had also benefited from huge changes and that the village had seen traffic calming measures funded by the Council which had made a difference albeit not as much as had been hoped.

The Clerk was thanked for his work on the accounts and for the manner in which the financial affairs of the Council were being conducted.

Report on the Charities:

The Clerk gave details of the amount collected with regard to the Dudley & Pope Charity, which he said had remained the same as it had been for many years.

Ms. Pharoah wondered whether it might be time to consider winding up this small charity.

Recreation Ground Charity:

The Clerk gave details of the distribution of the above charity monies.

The details of the varying amounts were in the Recreation Ground Charity file said the Clerk.

Other Reports:

Report from Mr. Alan Tanner District Councillor for Cosby & South Whetstone:

Thank you for your support for the last sixteen years and I hope for the future. This last year again has been very eventful. I am still on the Development Control Panel but now more as a substitute.

I still retain the right, for Cosby and South Whetstone, to call in questionable Officer decisions and put before the Planning Committee, proving there are good planning reasons for doing so.

I still serve on the Licensing and Regulatory Committee. Also I serve on the Scrutiny Commission and various working groups. I will always be a strong supporter of our National Health Service and still serve on a local Patient Participation Group. I strongly support local allotments.

This last year has seen developments in South Whetstone and Cosby and these have undergone scrutiny to a high degree and will continue to do so into the future.

After many years I have stepped down from the role of school governor. I shall always give my support to Cosby Primary School who taught my son and grandchildren so well.

To the future, there will be many challenges ahead, particularly with regard to new house building, infrastructure, car parking, where and when, and also flooding issues.

Thank you once again.
Alan Tanner.

Report from Mr. Les Phillimore District Councillor for Cosby & South Whetstone:

Good evening Chairman, Members and Clerk.

My apologies for absence but I am away at the Federation of Small Businesses Annual Conference so I hope the Clerk is able to read out my report.

As you are aware this is both my first term of office with both Cosby Parish Council and as a District Councillor at Blaby District Council and a very steep learning curve it has been.

I am though absolutely delighted to report that other than two unrelated matters raised with me by two residents who are actually South Whetstone residents, I have not had any residents concerns raised with me and that is surely a huge testament to the community of Cosby.

We are all aware of the potential impact of large housing developments arriving in Cosby and indeed, I have been informed today (16.03.16) that the expected outline application for the Hewitt site has been submitted – a development of up to 180 houses is sought. Protecting and maintaining the identity and community spirit of Cosby as the inevitable planning applications come forward will be one of the greatest challenges for us.

Looking forward, more and more legislation is making it more and more favourable for developers to gain planning permission and it is therefore essential that Members are actively involved in fighting for the best outcomes for Cosby and that we are any campaign, for or against, from the outset of any application.

Blaby District Council:

Blaby District Council where I serve on Planning Committee, Finance Scrutiny, Scrutiny Commission, Budget Scrutiny, Joint Consultative Board and Highways Forum are proving to be extremely interesting and hopefully provide a broad platform from which to keep Cosby Parish Council Members informed and influence the future direction of Blaby District Council on behalf of us all.

As District Councillors, Alan Tanner and I can confirm that Section 106 contributions are now being positively managed by the Officers at Blaby DC and we should have an Officer in attendance in the April Parish Council meeting to talk to members specifically about Section 106 contributions.

Subject to the “deal being struck” if the Hewitt development goes ahead, no doubt there will be a substantial contribution to the village as a result of that development and we need to start thinking now as to where and on what those contributions should be spent

There is also the possibility that for a period of one trial year there will be quarterly meetings with Parish Council Clerks at Blaby DC specifically to discuss Section 106 contributions and projects within villages on which we would like to spend those contributions - I will keep Members informed accordingly.

Alan and I can also confirm that Blaby District Council has resolved to maintain New Homes Bous payments to Parish Councils for the year 2016/17.

With regards to the potential Community Library – I would urge Members to support the group in whatever manner we are able to so do.

There have a small number of senior appointment changes at Blaby DC with Jane Toman taking over as Interim Chief Executive as Sandra Whiles retires and Sarah Penelli becomes Interim Director of People and Finance.

Inevitably with the uncertainty of future Central Government Support Grants to Local Councils, we face a number of years of interesting budgeting and expenditure rounds at all levels of local Government, but Members can be assured that my experience to date with Officers at Blaby DC confirms that there is a very real commitment to supporting the Town and Parish Councils as best as they can, indeed, I have today (16.03.2016) attended a conference on behalf of Blaby DC in my scrutiny role about “commercialisation and new ways of funding councils” and Blaby DC is already ahead of the curve on virtually every level of thinking and practice but we do and will face complex challenges moving forward to 2020.

I hope to see you at the April meeting.

Report from County Councillor Mr. David Jennings:

It has again been an eventful year. In May of last year I was re-elected to Blaby District Council for a tenth term for the Countesthorpe Ward. I was also re-elected to Countesthorpe Parish Council for a thirteenth term. I was 22 years of age when first elected. Some years have now passed, but I am still continuing to make my presence felt.

It is in the capacity of Leicestershire County Councillor for the Cosby and Countesthorpe Division that I present this report.

This Council year I am the Chairman of the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Committee, Chairman of Blaby Highways Forum and Chairman of the Local Government Superannuation Board. In addition to which I am the Chairman of the controlling Conservative Group.

I also serve on the Employment Committee, the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Members Development Committee.

I serve on a number of minor Committees and Boards.

Only yesterday I was appointed as the Chairman of a new Committee which is to look into improving the Market Harborough Railway line Speed Electrification and Railway Station.

The Local Government settlement this year hit County Councils the hardest. Leicestershire being the lowest funded has to find an additional £4.6 Million savings that we were not planning for. Whilst the Government has brought forward welcome changes, such as an offer of a 4 year settlement, localisation of business rates, extra money for the Better Care Fund (partly from changes to New Homes Bonus) these changes to “spending power” do not kick in for 2 years and take no account in the growth in the budget for adults and children’s social care.

Adult Social Care costs will increase by £50Million pa alone and the savings required will rise to £78Million. This is in addition to the £103 Million already saved pa over the last 5 years. We have been forced in proposing a 1.99% rise in the county element of the council tax for 2016/17 and will be taking the social care precept of 2% to help fund adult social care.

I am very grateful to Alberto Costa MP for organising and leading a meeting with the Local Government Minister Liam Fox MP, where all Leicestershire MPs were unanimous in their support for the County Council and in their demands for a better deal for Leicestershire.

Despite all this Leicestershire County Council will be spending over one half of a billion pounds next year on the peoples of Leicestershire.

Please remember if it concerns you, then it concerns me. Contact me at any reasonable time to discuss any issues. My best regards to you all.

David Jennings. Leicestershire County Councillor – Cosby and Countesthorpe Division.

Parishioners Time:

There were no issues raised under this item.

Chairman Closes the Meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.40pm and thanked Mr. Anderson for his attendance.

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Mrs. J. Chapman. Chairman.
March 2017.