

GREAT DODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Great Doddington Parish Council held on 7 May 2019 in the Chapel Rooms, Chapel Lane, Great Doddington.

Present: Mr C Davies (Chairman), Mr J Sharp (Vice-Chairman) Mr J Crisp, Mr P Cunningham, Mr K Howes, Mr D Kelly, Mrs L Ross, Mrs S Sharp and Mrs A Smith.

Also present: Mrs C A Mundy (Clerk) County Councillor Gough and his wife and one parishioner.

Apologies were received from Borough Councillor Graves.

19/09 Welcome form the Chairman and Annual Report

The chairman welcomed everyone to the annual meeting of the parish council and read out the report on the activities for the year as précised below:

Unitary Issues - Following the issues at the county council the threat of two unitary councils has now become more of a reality though confirmation is still awaited from the Secretary of State as to when, or if, this is likely to happen. A Change Order was put forward to delay the elections which should have taken place last week for the parish council. It is expected that these will now happen on 7 May 2020.

In the meantime the parish council has continued to deal with day to day matters. There were two main projects this year, the first to complete the replacement street lighting and second to finalise the work at the recreation ground.

Replacement lamps - The street lamp replacement has now been completed with the assistance of a grant from the borough council which was much appreciated.

Play equipment – Recreation Ground - Work commenced this week following the hard work of the Friends of Great Doddington Park's fundraising efforts which meant that over £7,000 was raised towards the costs of the refurbishment. A community grant was also given by the borough council and the parish council made up the remainder of the cost totalling over £38,000. We hope that the children really appreciate the new equipment and that most importantly it is looked after. Our thanks go to Sarita Sharp and the rest of the team for all their hard work. The Mayor, Councillor Jo Beirne has been invited to attend the official opening in September, which will take place over the Scarecrow Weekend.

Highway issues - With the cut-backs at the county council, it is taking longer for potholes to be repaired – on average it is 26 weeks from the time of reporting them to getting a repair. To avoid delay please take, and also encourage others to take, a photo of any pothole you see and email directly to the county council this will get the call registered as soon as possible.

Requests have been made for various other highway works, such as tree reducing, cutting back of suckers on the trees and general clearance of vegetation to be carried out, but these are not classed as priority, and will be done as and when there are funds and availability.

Local Plan - After a lot of work by the planning section at the borough council the plan was officially adopted in April 2019.

Hardwater Crossroads - The work to the bridge at Hardwater Crossroads was completed ahead of schedule thanks to the hard lobbying of County Councillor Gough. There have subsequently been a number of accidents and a fatality and there has been a call by some to reduce the speed limit on Hardwater Road, particularly near to Summer Leys, but there is no further information in this regard.

Speeding - Speeding continues to be an issue and a Speedwatch Group has been set up by a local resident with a number of volunteers, who we thank for coming forward. The Community Safety Team will be lending out the speed camera and posters have recently been put up through the village.

Crematorium - The crematorium has been in operation since September 2016 and there have been no particular issues. It has proved to be very popular and both the Merry Miller and The Stag are used for wakes.

The rebuilding of the prison - Work has started on the road behind the garages at Millers Park to access the prison site which is being demolished in readiness for the building work to start.

Social Media - As is the modern way of life, residents now tend to post on social media. This can often exacerbate an issue and thanks is extended to Peter Cunningham who keeps an eye on this and posts as appropriate, reporting back to the parish council.

Thanks are extending to all of the above plus my fellow parish councillors, the clerk and all our local volunteers.

19/10 REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR GOUGH

County Councillor Gough reported on the financial issues of the county council which had been widely publicised. Whilst there was a significant improvement there were still serious concerns. Work was ongoing to make changes to contracts that were no longer fit for purposes particularly around social care. As the chairman had said it was likely that the Secretary of State would announce that there would be two unitary councils for Northamptonshire. There was a considerable amount of work taking place in the background with a lot of joint working between the district councils. With regard to highways there was concern over the delay to road repairs. Councillors had been asked to nominate roads for resurfacing in their wards and he had suggested Glenfield Drive and The Ridge. Parish Councillors also referred to Cut Throat Lane as needing urgent repairs. After much lobbying Hardwater Bridge had been reopened, ahead of schedule. A number of accidents caused by speeding had caused concern. He was looking into remedial action. It was suggested that the cutting back of foliage, more signage and sorting out the camber on the road may help. On a personal note he was delighted to report that his daughter who had been born prematurely was doing well and he hoped would soon be out of hospital and at home.

(Councillor and Mrs Gough left the meeting.)

19/11 POORS LAND CHARITY

The vice-chairman reported that four pensioner's lunches had been held in the last 12 months and again had proved to be well attended and popular. One student loan of £50 towards books had been granted. More requests for book grants would happily be considered and would again be advertised in the Village News. The charity investment now amounted to £27,000.

19/12 REPORT BY BOROUGH COUNCILLOR GRAVES

Councillor Graves had been unable to attend the meeting due to ill-health. The clerk would extend the parish council's best wishes to him.

The meeting concluded at 7.20pm

Chairman

