

Aynho Annual Parish Meeting 2025

Minutes – 28 April 2025 @19:00

2501 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, Cllr Dawn Willis, introduced herself and welcomed attendees to the meeting. She explained current pre-election restrictions and context of the meeting being a meeting of the Parish and not a Council meeting.

Apologies received from Cllr Alan Beaumont.

Chair then invited all Cllrs and the Clerk/RFO to make a brief statement about themselves, explaining their specific areas of responsibility.

2502 Approval of Minutes - 20 May 2024

On the proposition of Cllr Les Horley, unanimously agreed, minutes of Parish Meeting 20 May 2024 were approved.

2503 Chairman's Report

Thanks to Cllr Les Horley for putting together the Village Report. This is available to view online on the parish Council Website, the village community website and also the Face Book community page. I think you will agree; it is a thorough report and an interesting read. If anyone does not have online access and would like a paper copy, please let us know at the end of the meeting and we will have a copy printed for you.

All councillors are re-elected after four years. This year's elections are being held on 1st May. There have only been 7 nominations, so as we are uncontested, we shall continue to be your councillors for another year.

Simon Wormald has decided to retire and will not be re standing. His Knowledge of Parish Governance and enthusiasm will be greatly missed. We wish him a very happy retirement. Alan Beaumont is also stepping down after a hectic year due to heavy work commitments. He has been a great support and help with the financial administration, representing the Council on Village Hall Committee and lots of practical work on the Pavilion and around the Village.

This year has also seen the retirement of a much-appreciated member of our council, our RFO, Responsible Finance officer, Mr Stephen Brook. Stephen stepped into the breach 4 years ago, following a short break from previous Councillor and Chairman duties. His many years' experience of Parish Council procedures and ready advice will be greatly missed. During Stephens time on the Parish Council, he was instrumental in securing the current street lighting in our village. Following Stephens retirement, Our Clerk, Mr Youel has taken on this role alongside his role as Clerk.

I would like to thank them all for their time, hard work and commitment to the PC.

Therefore, we shall be recruiting 2 new members to join the PC. If you are interested in joining us, please contact myself or our Clerk, Mr Youel.

Since our last Annual meeting, I have overseen a lot of changes over the past year, and I am truly grateful for the help and support from all the Councillors. We all give our time voluntarily. Together we have had a very busy year and achieved a great deal.

Planning

APC made comment on a range of applications throughout the year with many moving forward to a successful conclusion. The only outstanding application for resolution being the Cartwright hotel. I know this of keen interest to many of you and we will keep you informed of future developments as they come to our attention. The current temporary car park on Station Road for RH staff has been extended until end of October 2025.

Maintenance of Village and facilities

Cllrs Ray Willis, Alan Beaumont, Richard Reese, Jerry Stephenson and I have worked hard to ensure facilities were maintained and replaced where necessary, around the village. Together we have fitted a new kitchen in the Pavilion, repainted the floors, revamped the tired changing rooms adding storage cupboards. Much needed work has also been carried out to the exterior of the Pavilion with further maintenance continuing through the coming year. The amenity now looks fresh and is a wonderful facility for Sports and recreational events.

We will have the damaged areas of the running track repaired this year, whilst much of the track is wearing well, there is some tree root damage to a couple of areas. The council have fulfilled its commitment to repair and repaint the surface to the Tennis Court, which will continue to provide a wonderful asset for many years to come. Work has also been conducted at the Play Park. The Bench seating around the silver birch has been replaced, a New Picnic Bench has been added, and plans are to repair / replace and repaint the play equipment.

A huge thank you to Cllr Ray Willis for all his hard work, time and commitment to the Village. It hasn't gone unnoticed and is much appreciated by many.

We have replaced 4 dog waste bins, thank you Helen for doing the research. May I remind everyone who has a dog, it is not the council responsibility to provide dog waste bags. The Salt Bin was replaced on Portway, thanks to Simon for the research and installation.

Village Clean up

We are grateful to all those that volunteered to improve the appearance of the Village. Over 20 bags of litter were collected. Thanks to Richard for coordinating the Big Clean up down Station Road. We plan to have another clean-up day in the Autumn.

Traffic management

Aynho PC, conducted a speed watch Survey. Thank you to all those residents and councillors that gave up their time for this. As a result of our efforts 279 speeding offenders within a four-week period were reported to Northamptonshire Police. As a consequence of this survey and a talks between WNC/Kier /Parish Council The installation of 20mph Advisory Speed Signs have been placed around the village, mainly on Roundtown and further VAS Vehicle Activated Signs will be installed in the near future.

A zebra crossing, a long-standing West Northants initiative, will also soon be completed. Les, Ray and I have been in talks with Keir minimize any disruption to the village It is planned to go ahead in May. Hopefully these additions to the village will have a positive impact on the Village and help the speeding issues. Traffic Safety remains a priority for the Council, and we will be exploring future traffic management initiative in the coming year.

Station Road Pedestrian Track

At the end of the winter period, a team of Councillors and residents cleared a walkable track allowing pedestrian access between the Village and the Wharf. Sturdy footwear is recommended. Keeping the track clear will be an ongoing challenge, but the more it is used, the more defined the path will become. It links us to the Great Western Arms and The Brew box which both are a welcome sight after the walk.

Going forward

2025 will offer opportunities for residents to work with Aynho Parish Council. We will help launch a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, including Street watch initiative, which will be discussed this evening. We encourage residents to become involved in a variety of ways. Helping with Speed watch, village clean up and the joining in initiatives like the Neighbourhood watch scheme or joining us on the Parish Council.

2504 Reports from Local Authorities and Parish Organisations

Ward Councillor Rebecca Breese, West Northamptonshire Council

- WNC has been Unitary Council now for 4 years, £500M budget managed well, with tiny overspend.
- Increased demand on social care, housing and children's services, particularly special educational needs.
- Council Tax increase by maximum allowed of 4.99%, 2% goes straight to adult social care.
- By not increasing Council Tax previously WNC in trouble 10 years ago resulting in lost benefits.
- WNC are a solvent council, 50 other councils are close to insolvency.
- Investment in special needs school, opens September. Should ultimately make savings.
- £10M spent on roads and potholes with an extra £1M in budget for footpaths.

- Farthinghoe and other 5 recycling centres secured for next 15 years under a new contract. Proof of address required at Ardley will probably replicated at WNC sites. Charges at Ardley but not in WNC.
- 50% of all waste collected is recycled. 95% of black bin waste collection is treated, only 5% goes to landfill.
- Fly-tipping enforcement team commissioned. Civil penalties. Unlicensed contractors are frequent culprits.
- WNC as a council set to be net zero by 2030, small solar farms. As council area have agreed strategy for net zero strategy by 2045.

Ward Councillor Rosie Herring, West Northamptonshire Council

- Children's services were failing under old County Council but now fostering and adoption rated as good by Ofsted, and leadership rated as outstanding. Social care moved from inadequate to requires improvement.
- Family hub opened in Towcester, with two more planned at Daventry and Northampton. These offer help and advice for all age children and families.
- Free parking maintained in Brackley and Towcester, to keep highstreets vibrant.
- New tree strategy adopted, more wildflower verges.
- Significant flooding affected Middleton Cheney and Billing; council helped find shelter for those in need.
- Men in Sheds in Evenly Wood up and running.
- SNVB board member.
- Following knife crime incident with unacceptable delay in police response, contacted police Chief Inspector who is now visiting Middleton Cheney on 1st May.

Restoration Hardware England – Tim Morris

- Currently using potential 3rd restaurant as hire event venue only. Will be open in future when have unique restaurant concept.
- Temporary carpark to October, property on market, looking for alternate accommodation, but will not impact on village parking. Not visitor parking, employees only (100+ staff). Plans to expand parking on site refused.
- Working with outside companies, JLR, Bentley etc., private events. Within normal operating hours and conditions.
- Putting general calendar of events together to engage community and customer and client base.
- Initiative for ongoing local discount being considered.
- Footpath and collapsed wall. Reached out to James Perkins, placing bench at outlook. Landscape contractor investigating footpath/wall. Potential S106 agreement to previous permission.

2505 Neighbourhood Watch

Councillor Leslie Horley introduced and explained the Neighbourhood Watch initiative already started by the council. Resident led project now looking for a Coordinator to take forward.

- NHW work with other organisations, Northants talking, community speed watch and police.
- Aynho has own needs, more community spirited.
- Reporting crime effectively, including suspicious activity.
- Support crime prevention measures.
- Identify vulnerable residents.
- Contact us, useful links via NHW website.
- Promote well-being.
- Reduce isolation and loneliness.
- Address poor lighting areas.

Please leave contact details if interested.

2506 Questions from the public

Approx 22 members of the public attended.

Q1 - On fly-tipping – Will WNC be charging at recycling centres as is being done at Ardley? the harder we make it for people to take waste to tip the greater the amount of fly-tipping. Ardley take items Fartinghoe won't.

A – Cllr Breese, WNC looking at expanding range of recyclables accepted, no plans for charging, but will likely introduce proof of address.

Q2 – Men in Sheds at Evenly Wood – There is a £9 charge to get in the grounds, is that free of charge for those attending?

A – Cllr Herring, yes, no charge to Men in Sheds.

Q3 – Funding for School - as chair of local primary school, all financial and HR support has been stripped away by Unitary Council, and the school now have to outsource. This support was maintained in North Northants area. Are there plans for WNC to bring support back?

A – Cllr Breese, we weren't aware of that, please come back to us via email after Thursday and we will find out the situation and feedback.

Q4 – Sports Field - Rounders set was donated for use of community, no one knows its there, could this be communicated.

A - Cllr Dawn Willis, numerous pieces of equipment in storage, not left out as would go missing, not sure how best to make people aware what is there.

Q5 – Finances - figures have changed this year with increases, what is being paid for by precept our taxes, and what is paid for from monies for community resources, Pavilion etc. There is no separation in accounts. £15,000 was given in donations or money raised. Need to know what separation is between public things taxes, and other things. Uncomfortable about greyness between two areas, particularly as figures growing quite considerably. Don't understand how loan interest repayment of £2080 can be same amount as total borrowings, and what is it.

A – Cllr Wormald – Loan payment was for streetlights and has now ended. This was in council minutes.

A – Clerk/RFO – Parish Council must resolve a budget for expected expenditure for next financial year, it must then consider what expected income will be generated, the remainder then being the demand on the precept. Council has one pot of money to manage everything within its responsibility. Some elements can generate income such as sports field, Pavilion rental, Tennis Court hire etc., there may be grants or donations that can come in which is income, the difference council then needs to balance its budget is what the precept demand would be. While there is effectively no separation on how received income is spent, councillors will look at how income is received and prioritise spending against the relative areas.

All expenditure is published on monthly basis following approval. Council considers and approves payments at each meeting which are then published on the website.

Currently in the process of AGAR, The May meeting on the website already has AGAR section 2 (all income and expenditure for year in broad terms) and the internal auditor report uploaded. AGAR paperwork should be completed at the May meeting then sent to the external auditor. When external auditor report is received this will also be published on website. All accounts are transparent and published and audited by 2 sets of auditors.

Full list of receipts and payments for year was reported to last council meeting and published on website.

Q6 – Will the new Zebra crossing have beacons or traffic lights?

A – Cllr Ray Willis – it will have shrouded beacons.

2507 Any other business

None

2508 Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked all for attending and their contribution and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed at 20:10.

