

PARISH OF HOLCOT

Mrs Lisa Callan (Parish Clerk)
2 Walgarth Court
Holcot
Northamptonshire
NN6 9TL

MINUTES OF THE HOLCOT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, BACK LANE, HOLCOT NN6 9SL, ON TUESDAY 30 MAY 2017 AT 7.30 P.M.

Present: Councillor Walker (Chairman), Councillor Buckle (Vice-Chair), Councillor Middleton, Councillor Fountain, Councillor Gunnett, Councillor Wilson, Councillor Scordellis, Councillor Hawkins

Minutes taken by: L Callan (Parish Council Clerk).

Also in attendance: 14 Parishioners

Apologies: Cllr Judy Shephard

The Chair opened the meeting. He précised the main points of his report.

Parish Council Chairman's Report - David Walker:

Thank you everyone for coming along this evening – if you don't know me, I am David Walker and I'm the Chair of the Parish Council. The Parish Council decided this year to hold the Annual Parish Meeting in an evening as it may be preferable for some people – let us know what you think.

Today's meeting is important for the Parish Council as it allows us to meet and discuss with parishioners the work of the Parish Council and to celebrate our lives in Holcot. In the next few minutes I will outline what has happened in Holcot since the last Annual Parish Meeting (in June 2016), our successes and challenges, as well as provide a summary of what else has happened in Holcot that is outside the Parish Council's direct control but contributes to the quality of life that we hopefully all enjoy.

I will also endeavour to dust down my crystal ball again and suggest what I expect to be the top challenges over the next 12 months. There is a written report which will be available on the parish website, so I will talk to the main points rather than read verbatim.

At this point I would like to introduce the Parish Councillors to the meeting;

Councillor	Sector responsibility
Roger Gunnett	Main St/Farm Close/Walgarth Ct
David Walker	Back Lane/Brittens View
Jackie Fountain	Moulton Rd/Tithe Close
Kathryn Buckle	Sywell Rd/Ivy Farm/Sunny Bank

Ralph Hawkins	All outlying properties
Phil Scordellis	Rectory Lane/Beelhook/Walgrave Rd
Martin Wilson	Brixworth Rd/Glebe Close
Nick Middleton	Poplars Lane/Winsland Court

Robert Sinclair resigned from the Council due to work commitments during the past year, and we should all thank him for his service. Nick Middleton has recently been co-opted to the Council.

Each of the Councillors has a “sector responsibility” for part of the Parish, with the Councillor for your sector being your principal point of contact. As far as possible the sectors are aligned to the Councillor’s own home. Councillors also have a portfolio responsibility for a number of subjects – for instance Phil is responsible for road safety, Kathryn for Police Matters, Jackie for playing field and so on. The full list of portfolio responsibilities is on the Parish Council page on the website.

The last person to mention in relation to the Parish Council is our Parish Clerk, Lisa Callan. Lisa’s job is to manage the activities of the Parish Council on a day-to-day basis. It is a role that is far beyond that of an employee as I am sure that you appreciate. Thank you to all of the Councillors and the Clerk for your service over the last year.

When we look at the activities over the last year, I will draw a distinction of the activities of the Parish Council itself and of the Parish as a whole. I haven’t listed everything, but here goes.

Parish Council

Some particular projects – a real variety

- ***The Walgrave Road footpath*** – I reported last year that we expected this to be open during last summer, but the process is drawn out. Lawyers are now involved - let’s hope for this summer.
- ***The Crossroads project*** – Parishioners were asked for their opinions on what might be done to improve the green on the crossroads – work and the final design is awaiting the outcome of the road safety enforcement activities.
- ***Northampton North Orbital Route and Northampton North SUE (Overstone Leys/Overstone Green)*** – The NNOR is due for consultation again starting 19 June – this second consultation has been delayed due to the election. The work on Northampton North SUE has started, with a very small development. Eventually it will be 3500 houses stretching to the Holcot roundabout. The A43 works that have started are associated with this, with a long-term objective of dualling from Round Spinney to the A14.
- ***Playing Field Development*** - Following on from last year’s inspection, various maintenance jobs have been undertaken on the playing field equipment (thanks are due yet again to the Friends of Holcot for their support), as well as activities to ensure compliance with current regulations. The last of these is to remove the slide that no longer complies with safety requirements.

Jackie Fountain and Lisa Callan have set-up a “Playing Field Development Group” to develop the playing field as well as ensure regulatory compliance, and it is pleasing that a group of parishioners has quickly formed. They will need support, skills and funding to move this project forward – if you are able to get involved in any way please contact Jackie (jfountain40@googlemail.com 780070) or Lisa (lisa.callan@yahoo.com 781230). Alexis will update us this evening.

- **Neighbourhood Planning approach** - Having completed a research project, the Parish Council could not see benefits or appetite for compiling a neighbourhood plan as Holcot is protected from developments outside the village by two sections of the current Daventry Local Plan.

As a Village Design Statement (VDS) is a “material consideration” for planning purposes and we already have a draft, this will be resurrected and completed during 2017. A draft will be available shortly – Roger will provide a brief update.

The VDS is only part of the planning environment for Holcot, so we will prepare a new Parish Plan in 2018 – the last one was published in 2008. This will be a community project, with everyone having the opportunity to participate.

Road safety

- You will have seen in the newsletter, on the website, in Parish Council agenda and minutes that the Parish Council continues to strive to improve road safety in Holcot. The NCC/Northamptonshire Police Speed Limit Review Panel has again refused our request to reduce stated speed limits across the Parish – getting this far has taken a great deal of effort and is hugely frustrating. The Parish Council had provided extensive written evidence of the scale of the problems (such as the 25% increase in traffic after the A43 works started), cited many specific examples of why we believe that reduced limits will improve road safety as well as opportunities for “engineering-based” enforcement. Despite the evidence, the Panel do not believe that changing limits will have the desired effect given the road conditions, and although we have pointed out plenty of precedents these were apparently implemented without control prior to the committee being established. We will continue to work with Northamptonshire Highways and pursue road safety objectives, and we will be appealing in the near future. We have asked Judy Shephard (our County Councillor) what help she can give, after she gave her wholehearted support for our original application. Phil will provide a short update this evening.
- Following the fatality at the Hannington turn in January, our Community Speedwatch programme started much earlier than we anticipated. The volunteer team were trained and out monitoring speeds and whilst several speeding motorists have been reported, it is very clear that high-vis jackets and warning boards do reduce speeds and we hope will change the behaviours of some drivers. You can still support this programme for 3 weeks in the summer, details are on the website – email lisa.callan@yahoo.com to volunteer. Thank you to everyone involved, and Lisa for organising us.

Some of the routine but important stuff

- Lighting – we continue to spend a lot of time and effort on lighting in the village. We continue to control the costs of lighting the village through gradually modernising lights and managing the costs associated with electricity metering.
 - The website – we continue to promote the use of the website as the best source of information about what is happening in the parish – it is updated regularly so **please please please** subscribe to the site to receive email notifications of news items, and don't forget to email in your news items or ideas of how the site could be improved or extended. We have about 140 subscribers at the moment.
 - The newsletter – Holcot's other key communications medium is our quarterly printed newsletter, which continues to receive news items from across the parish. To reduce costs we have made it a single A3 sheet – this will continue to develop to improve the use of space, for instance by removing paid adverts. Please continue to use it.
 - Parish maintenance and the Friends of Holcot – the 'Friends of Holcot' group of parishioners continue to support the parish by doing all of the essential maintenance tasks that helps keep our parish looking in such great condition. Thanks Phillip Pomeroy for coordinating, and the whole team for everything you do for us.
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Governance and Financial Performance

I can report that the Parish Council have met formally 10 times since the last Annual Parish Meeting in June 2016. The Council has continued to improve its transparency and publication of information in line with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Transparency Requirements 2015. The Parish Council have updated their financial regulations this year, and appointed Kathryn Buckle as Councillor responsible for control and governance. It continues to be my view that the regulatory and control pressures on the Parish Council are unlikely to reduce.

Lisa has circulated to this meeting a summary of the financial performance of the Council for Financial Year 2016/17. I have abbreviated these below and would just like to draw your attention to some of the key numbers. You can monitor financial performance on the website during the year.

(rounded £)	£	£	£
Balance brought forward from 31 March 2016:			11745
Income			
Precept	17000		Unchanged
Other Income			
	VAT Reclaim: 1618		
	Other: 2140		
Total other income:	3758		
Total income			20758
Expenditure			
Admin and communications:	1777		
Maintenance:	5834		£3900 mowing
Projects:	1346		
Lighting:	1690		

Grants/Contributions:	2575	Church, Village Hall, Hub, Clock
Other:	3733	Insurance, clerk salary

Total expenditure (16954) Rounding applied

Total balances and reserves at the end of the year: 15548 Rounding applied

Other Community activity

I promised that I would mention some of the other things that are not within the control of the Parish Council, but have contributed massively to the community over the last year.

- The Village Hall and Church Room are fantastic facilities – we are very lucky, and a huge amount of effort goes into looking after these amenities for the parish;
- The Holcot Hub Monday-evening youth group continues to support our children;
- A Group of Parishioners look after the defibrillator;
- The various clubs and societies that use the village hall and church room and local facilities – we are fortunate to have an active WI, Brownies, Footlights amateur drama group, dance group, art group, model boat club, model helicopter club, cricket club and so on. These groups are always looking for new members, so please don't hesitate to get involved;
- We are fortunate to have the allotments which are used by many parishioners, and the Flower and Vegetable Show organised by the Village Hall committee is an important annual event, maintaining fantastic traditions;
- The annual Christmas dinner for our more senior citizens is another important annual event;
- The White Swan, with open mics, quiz nights and other events; as well as events organised by other groups such as the concert by Lincoln Noel and the recent Lost Hollow band from Nashville.

Thank you again to everyone that has in any way supported these and of course all of the other activities not mentioned.

Back to the Parish Council - What are some of the likely priorities of Parish Council over the next year or so?

- We will continue to harass, cajole and make increasing noise about road safety with the aim of getting the authorities to work with us. The speed limits, A43 works, the NNOR and Northampton North SUE will all impact us.
- Completing the Village Design Statement to help protect us from planning issues, and preparing a new Parish Plan.
- Continuing to maintain the parish.
- Doing whatever we can to improve the playing field equipment .
- Opening of the Walgrave Road footpath!

There are lots of other things that the Parish Council will have to deal with of course - some we can foresee, but some we can't.

And finally...some last thankyou's

As I've talked I have thanked a lot of people, and there are loads more I probably should have thanked including officers and members at DDC and NCC, the emergency services and community organisations that support the Parish as well as other individuals and organisations. Thank you everyone for listening.

The Chair mentioned the County and District Councillor's reports and that they will be posted on the website as neither Councillor was available to attend.

County Councillor's Report - Judy Shephard:

I have now completed 20 years as your local County Councillor for the Moulton Division which comprised 13 villages. (Boughton, Pitsford, Moulton, Hannington, Holcot, Old, Overstone, Walgrave the Bramptons, the Harlestones and Spratton.)

We are approaching the County Council Elections on 4th May and have now entered a period of Purdah which will restrict the content of my report.

NCC have commenced the second year of a four year budget, and have to make and have to make £66.9m savings over the next 12 months which is a substantial challenge.

This is being achieved for example by:

- 12 Headquarter buildings being consolidated into one (One Angel Square) (£51M saving). The new Council offices will be occupied next month.
- Exploring if we can become Unitary Authority (duplication of services)
- Reducing front line services duplication (people receiving more than one service)
- Adopting a zero based budget approach (instead of looking at existing budgets and deciding what cuts can be made, we go to a position of each service having zero money and seeing what they need to deliver their outcomes!) ensuring resources are deployed to the right areas.
- No cuts are planned but the key is managing demand

Our Highways maintenance alliance is recognised as best value and ensures that we repair over 40,000 potholes a year. (which covers a 28,000 mile road network in Northamptonshire).

Since 2012 we have created 13,474 new School places in the county. This year, for example, saw Secondary School places allocated to more than 8000 pupils across Northamptonshire – 300 more than last year.

Our invaluable Fire & Rescue Service has attended more than 4000 incidents this year and the number of incidents continue to fall. This is testament to the work by the F&R in our communities through Home Safety Checks. This year, almost 80% of the homes in high risk areas have been visited and checked by our Fire Officers to help people to minimise risks to themselves and to their properties.

Our Library Plus Centres are being used more than ever and will have been visited more than 3 Million times this last year, and our valued Country Parks attracted over 2 million visitors.

We have established 'First for wellbeing' the largest publicly owned social enterprise of its type which is revolutionising our offer to residents in the services we provide. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has indicated that Northamptonshire is to receive 11.5m extra for Social Care in recognition of the demand pressures we face here on our service.

The number of older people in our county (currently 132,00 is predicted to grow by around 37,000 over the next 10 years. This means by 2027 the number of people over 85 will have increased by 7000! (from 16,000 to 23,000). This means we have to deliver our services in a much smarter way.

As part of our Next Generation Model we are creating NASS for the provision of Adult Social Care as a single entity (Olympus, Contracts, ASC combined) which will be fully operational by September of this year.

NCC are to run a further consultation on the preferred route for the Northern Orbital Route and the North-West Relief Road simultaneously. The consultation material will be available on the NCC website immediately before the start of the consultation which runs for 6 weeks from 15th May until the 30th of June. There will be a number of Exhibitions in several locations. (Including Boughton, Pitsford, Harlestone, Moulton and Kingsthorpe).

Locally I sit on Harlestone, Raybell, Boughton and Pitsford Liaison Forums, the OMBHH Committee, The Buckton Fields Liaison Forum and in addition I attend all the Parish Council Meetings within my Division and I have been a Boughton Parish Councillor for over 30 years.

I am at present Chairman of Development Control at NCC which deals with planning issues such as Schools, Roads, Minerals and Waste. It is a job I love!

District Councillor's Report - Ann Carter:

As always at this time of year, the Annual Parish Meeting gives residents the opportunity to meet with their various representatives at Parish, District and County Levels.

Many of you already know me as I have represented the Walgrave Ward for the last 14 years, but it is fair to say that a large proportion do not know me as they have never had cause to make contact. Those that have had a wide range of concerns and queries, mainly on the planning side but equally on such matters as missed bins, fly tipping, antisocial behaviour and general concerns about the rules and procedures of Local Government.

In all cases, I try to explain what I can and cannot achieve in these areas and where possible, intervene on behalf of residents who feel uncomfortable when dealing with Officers at DDC. This report is also meant to appraise residents of what is happening in and around the District. As you know, Daventry Calling does try as best it can to let all residents know the up-to-date position as does our Facebook and website pages. On this subject, the Spring issue is a wealth of information from applying for community grants to the major projects planned for 2017.

The Council has also voted to pursue a contract with Daventry Norse when the current contract ends with Amey in 2018. Many of you will know that the current cost of waste collection is set to rise

considerably and it was this fact that decided us to radically rethink our waste collection service to keep the cost down as much as possible. Please remember that it is not just your waste/recycling costs but also the cost of clearing fly tipping, street cleaning and keeping Daventry town and its surroundings, clean and tidy. There will be changes to the current system – one good thing is the blue and red boxes will disappear to be replaced by one bin for all recyclates. Normal waste will be collected every 3 weeks, recyclates every week as will food waste in the small brown bins. Green waste will still be an option at a small yearly extra cost for those that wish it. Nearer the time, all households will be fully informed of the new arrangements and the effective date.

As far as your District Councillor is concerned, I am still very much involved as Chairman of the Licensing Committee and currently making waves about the (in my view) very jaundiced report that has emerged from the Lords on the future of Licensing. As we are now facing a General Election, naturally such matters have been shelved for the time being and possibly shelved for a considerable length of time.

I am also very keen on promoting the concept of Affordable homes in our villages and regularly sit on the Affordable Homes subcommittee which brings together representatives from all Housing Associations that have homes already in the District.

Added to that, I am very supportive of the Walgrave Wellbeing Centre concept and meet with the Partners on a regular basis. It was disappointing however, that the open meeting held late last year in the Church room did not attract many residents.

I have nothing else to add to this report other than to thank all residents for their continued support and as always, consider it a privilege to be your advocate in many areas. I may not always give you the answer you would like to hear, but rest assured, it will be truthful, fair and without prejudice.

Village Design Statement - Roger Gunnett

Cllr Gunnett explained that the council had discussed the possibility of a neighbourhood plan, but since Holcot is well protected from development outside the village by clauses in the Local Plan, the council didn't feel a neighbourhood plan was necessary. The plan is to update the current design statement, and keep ahead of any changes in the Local Plan. The Village Design Statement has changed quite a bit, and some photographs need updating. Once updated, there will be a document available later this year for parishioners to view.

Road Safety - Phil Scordellis

Cllr Scordellis said that the council have been working with Highways and Daventry for the past 2-3 years regarding road safety issues in Holcot. The village has been allocated £35k to offset rat-running. The council have worked with Highways to put in traffic calming measures, and Highways are currently working on the finer details. Some of these traffic calming measures should be completed by the end of summer, and will include an electronic sign that gives actual speed and displays a message, road markings, advanced warning signs, and gateway features. Speed limit reductions are not included, as these were declined by the speed limit review panel.

Playing Field - Alexis Berry

Alexis explained that a few ladies in the village (Alexis Berry, Jackie Fountain, Lisa Callan, Liz Jessett, Andie Merrey, Katie Cawston & Lucy Wright), have formed a group to raise funds for the playing

field, in the hope to give it a much needed overhaul. The slide is being removed for health and safety reasons, and some of the older equipment may also need to be removed. The ladies are preparing to apply for grants and organise fundraising activities. The amount of money that will need to be raised will be around £45,000. The group would welcome any ideas regarding funding. Please contact Lisa Callan (01604 781230 / 07547 505027 lisa.callan@yahoo.com) or any of the other ladies if you have any helpful advice.

Questions to the Council:

Maureen Cooke raised concerns about traffic calming measures for Back Lane, and the blind corner if you are turning left going up on Main Street.

Cllr Scordellis explained that Highways have done their measurements, and it is legal. The Parish Council will consult again once a design is available.

David Ashworth asked if the speed limit reduction was rejected prior to the fatality that took place on Walgrave Road.

Cllr Scordellis said that speed hadn't been confirmed as a factor, but the panel would not consider the accident until it was fully reported on..

Cllr Walker said he will post the speed limit review report on the website.

Jill Sharman said that she finds it difficult to cross the road at the Crossroads, and asked if a pedestrian crossing or traffic lights would be possible to help people across.

Cllr Scordellis explained that those kind of measures were not really an option, as the cost for traffic lights alone would be £190,000.

Keith Burrell raised concerns about parking in the village as a result of posts placed at the causeway to prevent people parking. Cllr Wilson said that he had been delegated to monitor the situation, and hasn't seen any major problems to date.

Mr Burrell also asked if the £35,000 for traffic calming measures was section 106 money, and Cllr Scordellis explained that it was, that £150,000 was being shared between 4 villages.

Mr Burrell asked if some money could be used for footpaths for people who live outside of the village for safety. Cllr Scordellis said that a Highways standard footpath from the allotments to the bungalows on Moulton Road, would cost £90,000+.

Mr Burrell said that he thinks it could be done over time, and that he feels the village gets catered for, without consideration for those living in outside properties. Cllr Walker said that it will be considered for the parish plan. Mr Burrell also asked about the design of posts past the bungalows, and raised concern that they could possibly obscure vehicles oncoming at 60mph. Cllr Scordellis said that they will be placed further out of the village, and will not obscure visibility.

David Marriott said that trees around the west and north boundaries of the garden-plot at the junction of Moulton Road and Back Lane were in need of being cut back, as they are now overhanging. The clerk was asked to write to Mr & Mrs Haig who own the garden plot.

Sheila Ashworth expressed concern over the untidiness of the stretch of road where people are parking on Brixworth Road. Cllr Wilson said there are Highways signs available. The council agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.

Finances: The clerk circulated a copy of the Holcot Parish Council annual financial report for 2016/17, and there was one question from Mr Burrell who asked about the Parish Council reserves. Cllr Walker explained that the council have an unbalanced budget, and that the £8,000 of reserves are ring fenced.

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