

## Oundle Town Council – Annual Town Meeting 2018 Report

A Report from the Annual Town Meeting held at 7.30pm on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at the Queen Victoria Hall, Oundle.

### Present:

**Councillors:** Cllrs Sparkes (Mayor), Chapple, Chesser, N Oakes, S Oakes, Glen, Humphreys, Peel, Fuller, Hutton, Clark and Robinson.

**Clerk:** Emma Baker

**Council Staff:** Lisa Allan, Paul Smith, Deborah Saxby

**Police:** Sgt Paul Mitchinson

**County Councillor:** Cllr Heather Smith

**District Councillors:** Cllrs R Reichhold, P Stearn, J Vowles

**NCC Highways:** Sarah Barnwell

**Apologies received from:** Tom Pursglove MP, Janet McMurdo (Head Teacher of Oundle Primary School) and Emily Taylor (Oundle Church Clock Fund)

**Residents of Oundle:** 36 members of the public

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting

### **2. To receive the report from the 2017 Annual Town Meeting**

The Report from 2017 was received. A question was raised that the number of people present had not been recorded. The Clerk will ensure that the number would be included in the 2018 report.

### **3. Oundle Town Council**

#### • **Mayor's Report** – Cllr Roy Sparkes

The Mayor reported on complaints that were made against 8 Councillors 2 years ago. The complaints have now been concluded and there is no case to answer. The Council and working group members have been working hard on the Neighbourhood plan which is now in the Regulation 14 stage. He reported on the move to two Unitary authorities in Northamptonshire and the effect that this will have on Oundle Town Council.

#### • **Finance Report** – Cllr Roy Sparkes

The Mayor reported on the finances for the year. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes. It was agreed that hard copies of the accounts would be made available for the public next year as it was difficult to see on the slides.

The following questions were raised:

1. It was noted that some of the Charities had a reduced rent but Volunteer Action had not. Would the Council look into reducing the rent for Volunteer Action? The Mayor apologised as he had overlooked VA when the rents were discussed. It was agreed that the Council would review the rent for VA.

2. Requests were made to see the copies of the complaint reports. The Clerk will contact the Monitoring Officer to see if they can be released.

3. If OTC is going to take on more services would precept be increased or will money come from NCC with the devolved services. Cllr Heather Smith explained that the Council tax is being spent on Social care in the County. What is going to happen with Unitary Councils is only speculation at present.

4. If the Mayor is successful in suing the Council and received an amount of money would he give it back to the Council? The Mayor is concerned that it looks as though he has received the goods.

• **Planning – Cllr David Chapple**

Cllr Chapple gave an overview of what the OTC Planning Committee does and who is on it. On average OTC receives 10 applications per month for consultation. The majority are extensions to properties and Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's). Some are larger such as the new sports development at Oundle School. OTC can object but the decisions made at East Northants Council do not always agree. Cllr Chapple proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Neville Oakes who works so hard putting together the planning application presentation.

• **Estates Report – Cllr Malcolm Glenn**

Cllr Glen updated the meeting on what the Estates committee does. We are looking to extend the kitchen and add a changing facility for the dance studio which would cost approximately £70,000 and would be funded through a public works loan.

The Courthouse is due to have some roof repairs done in June and the double outside doors need to be replaced. Some of the window frames also need attention.

The Council is sole trustee for the Queen Victoria Hall, the outside doors are being decorated at present.

The porch has been replaced on the Joan Strong Centre. The potholes in the car parks will be fixed soon.

The boardwalk, which is in an area of natural beauty near the rugby club is in need of replacing. The new boardwalk will be modified for wheel chair access. We have S106 money available for this.

The Skatepark is due for an upgrade and we are working with ENC, the schools and the police to get a project put together to replace the skatepark. We have S106 money for the work.

Plans are being drawn up at present to build a workshop for the OTC Maintenance Team. We currently pay rent for workshop premises. The loan for the work should be less than the current rent we pay.

#### **5. Fletton Field Update**

The Oundle Recreation and Green Spaces Group gave a presentation on the history of Fletton Field and how important it is to keep as a green space within Oundle. The group worked extremely hard towards the Village Green Inquiry, which unfortunately was unsuccessful. Christina Cork thanked all the people involved in the inquiry and to the people who were witnesses. The Field is listed as a Community Asset and we have until 21<sup>st</sup> August to put together a bid for the land and submit it to NCC.

Cllr Heather Smith informed the meeting that NCC are obliged to get the highest bid for the land and are looking at building an Extra Care home on it. Cllr Stearn informed the meeting that there is a need for an Extra Care home in Oundle and this would be an ideal site for it.

The Recreation and Green Spaces group need volunteers to help with the bid. They are looking for donations.

#### **5. Police Update – PC Paul Mitchinson**

He was pleased to see so many people at the meeting. The team are here for community policing and do not get called to road traffic accidents. They have been involved in cross border policing with Lincolnshire, which is a successful hare coursing project. This enables them to catch members of organised crime groups and seize their property and make arrests.

There has been a small increase in Anti-social behaviour and theft from motor vehicles. He reminded us that we should not leave valuables in cars.

Cllr Reichhold – informed the meeting that some of his neighbours had been burgled and can the police assure us that it is being looked into. PC

Mitchinson informed the meeting that it was being looked into but there is not enough intelligence. He urged people to call in if they know anything.

There were concerns with speeding in West Street.

There is no longer a CCTV camera that can be shared across the county. ANPR is working in the Oundle area.

#### **6. County Councillor and District Councillors Update**

Cllr Stearn reported that any plans for Fletton Field had not been confirmed and the last applications on the field had been refused by ENC.

The Greenway cycle path is still being developed. The path currently runs from Rushden to Thrapston but the idea is to continue it to Peterborough.

Cllr Reichhold informed the meeting of the committees he is on – Joints Standards Committee and representative on the legal aid committee.

County Councillor Heather Smith informed the meeting about the proposed weight restriction on North Bridge. The bridge has been monitored and has structural issues. The weight restriction will be 3 tonnes. NCC are currently looking and strengthening solutions. The cost will be £750,000.

**7. Pathfinder II – Joanne Maddams NCC Emergency Planning**

Oundle has been part of the project since 2017. Cllr David Fuller is co-ordinating the project for Oundle. The project involves inspections of gullies and ditches in areas of prone to flooding and reports of the findings are drawn up. The team are encouraging communities to put together emergency plans. Anyone wanting to become a flood warden training and PPE is available. Support can also be given for cleaning ditches and gullies.

**8. Oundle Community Speed watch – Mr Alex Haidar**

The Speedwatch programme has been working for a year now. More volunteers are needed to help with the programme. Training is available on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 14<sup>th</sup> July and 25<sup>th</sup> August and takes place in Northampton. The speed camera is in Oundle on 25<sup>th</sup> June to 9<sup>th</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> September to 13<sup>th</sup> October. The training dates will be advertised on the electronic noticeboards.

**8. Questions from the floor on Oundle Issues**

A question was raised about parking permits for people parking in West Street. Parking permit fees are set by NCC. In the past OTC has asked for more parking permit areas but have been refused.

**Closing Remarks**

The Mayor thanked everyone for coming.

The meeting closed at 10.09pm.