

Great Addington Parish Council

Chairman's Report

18th May 2016

Six Councillors were elected unopposed in May 2015 to serve for a period of four years, with the one vacancy being filled by co-option at the first meeting. One other vacancy, created by resignation was filled by co-option in December. I would like to thank my fellow Councillors and our Parish Clerk for the time, skill, expertise, experience and effort that they bring to this Council.

Finance. GAPC's major budget items are Street Lighting, maintenance of the Closed Churchyard and our continued support for The Addingtons' Playing Field Association and The Memorial Hall. The Council has held its precept for 2016/17 at the same level as 2015/16, being £8614. Council Tax bills show an increase because the number of contributing households has reduced by two.

New website. The Council has created a new website. Our old site had insufficient space for us to publish the information needed under the Government's Transparency Code. The new site also allows us to integrate with "social media" sites and interact more freely with the public, by posting blogs and by email. Visit greataddingtonpc.co.uk and register to receive regular updates.

Street Lighting. In 2015 our electricity supplier E-On announced a 50% increase in the cost of our unmetered supply. This was the first increase for several years and brings E-ON into line with other suppliers. There appears to be little or no benefit in changing supplier. GAPC are investigating the option of changing the existing mixture of sodium and mercury lanterns to LED units. These units give an equivalent light output but with a lower power consumption. They project the light downwards, giving better illumination of roads and footways. They have a longer life and do not involve the use of heavy metals.

Traffic calming. The speed and volume of traffic through the village has long been an issue raised by residents. We have seen the benefits of the speed radar unit VAS(Vehicle Activated Sign) that we purchased 5 years ago. That unit is battery operated, requiring frequent changes of heavy lead acid batteries and is now in need of repairs that may be uneconomic and . We are therefore considering buying four new VAS units - one for each road into the village - that are mains powered. The cost of four units will be circa £8000. The Council are seeking assistance from Charities and other funding bodies to meet this cost.

We are also well advanced in discussions with Northants County Council Highways Dept. to improve road markings and signage (you will already have noticed the new 30 Roundels) and to provide "gates" that give the optical illusion of road narrowing at the entry to the village on Ringstead Road. All initiatives involving NCC are severely restrained by tight budgets.

We continue to participate in the county wide Community Speedwatch initiative. Trained volunteers monitor traffic speed over a two week period and offenders are contacted by the police and warned. This year we will have the equipment on three alternate weeks in August and September. New volunteers are always welcome, training sessions are available on Saturday 18th June and Saturday 30th July.

Flooding. The Council has recently collated information on flooding issues in the Manor Close - Lower Street area for submission to NCC and ENC. We will continue to work with these two bodies to try and find a solution.

Hare & Hounds. The Council has agreed to ask East Northants Council to register the Hare & Hounds as a Community Asset. If successful, should the pub be offered for sale other than as a licensed premises, action groups would have a buffer period in which to prepare an offer to purchase.

Burton Wold Cold Store. The Council held an Extraordinary Meeting in November 2015 to consider its views on an application to Kettering Borough Council for a cold store close to the parish boundary and alongside the A510. A formal response reflecting the views of residents was submitted.

Colin Fry. The Council was saddened by the sudden death of Colin Fry. Colin had served as a Councillor for several terms prior to May 2016. He had been an industrious Council Chairman who led with enthusiasm and charm and his contributions to the Great Addington community will be sorely missed.

NCC / ENC Support. We are grateful for the continued support from our County and District Councillors Sylvia and Dudley Hughes.

Nick Palmer
Chairman.