

## Chairman's Report – Annual Parish Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009

### **Councillors.**

Kevin Binley (Vice-chairman), Paul Eason, Colin Fry, Caroline May, Harry Mayes  
Nick Palmer (Chairman), Patricia Perkins OBE

Councillors Colin Fry and Kevin Binley represent GAPC on the "Addingtons' Playing Field Association Committee".

### **Clerk.**

Helen Hoier.

Cllr Dudley Hughes (ENC) and Cllr Andrew Langley (NCC) have regularly attended our meetings and we thank them for their interest and support.

Great Addington Parish Council has continued to meet each month throughout the 2008/9 year. The meetings are normally held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 7.45pm and are open to the public. The main business of the Council concerns:-

- Street lighting
- Maintenance of the "Closed Churchyard"
- Support for Local Organisations
  - Addington's Playing Field
  - Memorial Hall
  - East Northants Concessionary Travel
  - East Northants Citizens' Advice Bureau
  - Air Ambulance Service
  - Village Youth Group
- Consultation on Planning Matters at ENC and NCC levels

### **Finance.**

The Parish Precept (the amount GAPC adds to your Council Tax) has been set for 2009/10 at £6450.00. The precept for 2008/9 was £6650.00 and for 2007/8 was £6046.00.

A few years ago proceeds from the sale of the village minibus were invested and the income from that investment has been used by the Council to support the East Northants Concessionary Fares Scheme in the form of a £5.00 supplement payable to those residents buying Travel Tokens. Data Protection Regulations restrict the passing of data from ENC to GAPC, making payment of the supplement to individuals an onerous task for the GAPC Clerk. In addition, interest rates on the original investment have fallen and the number of eligible parishioners has increased each year. Despite these factors, the Council has decided to continue the payment of a supplement for the 2009/10 year. It is anticipated that the cost for 2009/10 will be £135.

GAPC are aware of the financial problems experienced by The Addington's Playing Field Association Committee that has traditionally relied on donations from both Great and Little Addington Parish Councils to meet its maintenance costs. It may be that in future years the amount of support given to the PFAC will need to increase above the level of £800.00 budgeted for 2008/9. GAPC would expect both Parishes to contribute in equal measure.

### **All Saints Churchyard.**

The part of All Saints churchyard immediately surrounding the church has been declared "closed". There is no room for more burials in this area. There is a section of churchyard to the rear of the church which remains open for burials. In 1997 responsibility for maintaining the closed churchyard passed from the Parochial Church Council to The Parish Council. This is in accordance with the Local Government Act of 1972. GAPC's responsibilities include maintenance of the churchyard wall. It has been obvious for some time that the wall has bulged and would need attention in due course. GAPC felt that, in addition to considering a simple repair, we should explore the possibility of rebuilding the wall further back into the churchyard so that the extremely narrow footpath on Cranford Road could be widened. During the year 2007/8 we held discussions with representatives of the Chancellor of Peterborough Diocese and Northants County Council Highways Dept. As a result the Council concluded that neither moving the wall nor the alternative of narrowing the roadway to allow widening of the path was economically feasible. As a result GAPC have commissioned an architect to write specifications and obtain tenders for repairing the wall on its existing base. The lowest tender received was from Steve Todd, a stonemason from Earls Barton with considerable experience of similar work. The total cost of the work will be close to £10,000. The Parish Clerk, with assistance from East Northants Council has obtained grants from Northamptonshire County Council, The

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John Warren Foundation and Cory Environmental Trust In East Northants totalling £4,500. We await the outcome of an application to Awards for All. These grants, added to the reserve fund held by the Council have allowed us to ask Steve Todd to begin the five week programme at his earliest convenience.

### **School relocation.**

The Parish Council have been advised by the Governors of Great Addington C of E Primary School, that the feasibility study looking into the possible relocation of the school to the Addingtons' Playing Field, has concluded that insufficient funds would be available.

### **Parish Plan.**

Last year I reported that analysis of the Parish Plan questionnaire had resulted in a brief summary being distributed. Since then the Council has received the final report from the team. Copies can be purchased from the Clerk or downloaded free of charge from the Council's website [www.parish-council.com/greataddington](http://www.parish-council.com/greataddington).

### **Traffic.**

At the request of GAPC, East Northants Safer Community Team have conducted a traffic speed survey. The unobtrusive detector unit was situated in Lower Street from Thursday 15th May to Wednesday 21st May 2008. A total of 15,521 traffic movements were detected. Eighty five percent of all traffic was travelling at less than 35 mph. The highest speeds detected were one motorcycle at 56mph and a car at 62mph. The Safer Community Team and NCC Highways Dept. consider these speeds to be low when compared with known "blackspots" within the County.

A team of volunteers from the village will shortly receive training in the use of a hand held speed gun. They will then have use of the device for a short period during which they will be able to monitor traffic speed at a number of selected sites in the village. Registration numbers speeding vehicles will be reported to the police. The gun will be available again from time to time depending on demand from other communities.

GAPC have informed NCC that this our highest transport and highways priorities are 1.) the general maintenance of roads (with particular reference to repairing potholes) 2.) regular gritting of the footways/roads during the winter, 3.) traffic calming schemes, 4.) effective drainage and 5.) improved public transport service.

### **Affordable Housing.**

The lack of affordable homes in rural villages can effect the viability and sustainability of rural life. In order to find out the extent of this problem in Great Addington, and to identify whether or not the needs of local people are being met, GAPC agreed that Midlands Rural Housing should undertake an independent Housing Needs Survey of the village on behalf of The Longhurst Group. We have been informed that 38% of households returned the survey forms and that the immediate need for three affordable homes does not justify further action by The Longhurst Group.

### **Planning Applications.**

The Council has been asked by ENC for comments on 11 Planning Applications relating to developments within the Parish Boundaries and on 3 applications in neighbouring Parishes.

### **BT PayPhone Kiosk**

BT have proposed to remove a number of payphones in the area, including the one in Main Street, Great Addington. East Northants Council has objected to this and we await the outcome. Two proposals have been made by BT for Councils who wish to retain their payphones. **Adopt.** The Parish Council would get the phone box - minus telephone equipment. We would be responsible for maintenance and upkeep and the retention of a phonebox without telephone equipment would require Planning Consent. **Sponsor.** BT would continue to provide a card phone service (as at present). GAPC would need to contribute £500 /annum towards BT's costs. We would also need to take responsibility for the kiosk's electricity bill - typically £17/annum . GAPC consider both these proposals to be an unnecessary drain on financial resources, but have deferred a decision until more is known about the ENC appeal.

Nick Palmer  
Chairman, Great Addington Parish Council  
30th April 2009