

Report to the Parish Councils 2016 – County Councillor Malcolm Longley.

As usual the year seems to have flown by and it seems only the other day that the last AGMs were upon us. I will divide this report into two sections which will cover some of the highlights from the Northampton County Council's perspective and some from the local Parishes.

With regard to the County Council the dominant issue is one of lack of finance primarily due to a reduction in central government funding. There was a shortfall from budget at the year-end which was made good from reserves and this financial year will again be difficult with a reduction from the 2015 spend of £120m over the next four years. Most of the overspends are in the areas of adult care and child care whilst the administration (LGSS) and the operational areas (rubbish collection, road maintenance etc.) are remaining broadly on plan.

The local infra-structure however has not been allowed to suffer as these programmes are funded on a capital, not revenue basis. Some of the good outcomes which are noticeable are the commencement of the link road between the M1 and Daventry often referred to as the Flore by-pass, the major road improvements in the town on the inner ring road, a major link road north of the county and on the outer ring road where a new round about has been completed paving the way for the progressive duelling of the A43.

On the academic side the old post office on the A508 is now being refitted and will soon become an academy for over 1,000 students adding to the academic improvements in the town.

On the political side the prospect of a Unitary government for the county is now under discussion and a programme has been initiated that will research the possibilities and assess the benefits or otherwise of this action. We all await the outcome which is scheduled for June with great interest.

The new County hall is well into the construction stage and will house the bulk of the county office staff currently spread around the town which will mean the closure and sale of a number of buildings the largest being John Dryden House in Lakeside. The primary driver of this initiative is to bring all of the staff together where this is practical and to implement the Next Generation Council model of governance. This model has been in being in LGSS for some considerable time and has proved very effective in both cost terms and operational excellence.

With regard to my personal involvement I have tried to maintain as much contact with the Parishes as I can but it is just not possible to be at all the meetings for in some cases three meet on the same evening. However there have been a number of successes notably via the empowerment fund which I strive to divide equally across the various Parishes and although the programme started quite slowly some years ago it is now oversubscribed thanks mainly to effective councils and bright clerks. I try to ensure that this fund is rationed fairly and used in areas that are usually short of cash and where a £500 contribution is well received – for example play groups. In addition, I also try to ensure that the projects meet with the Parish Council's approval.

A practical outcome to my Parish involvement is that a comprehensive study is now underway into the Braunston to Daventry cycle path and £1m. has been earmarked from CIL funds for its implementation. Significant progress has also taken place on the proposed Crick canal bridge and funds have been secured and underwritten such that a detailed design and costing is now underway.

With regard to my County role I am a member of the local government pensions board, I am on the County financial scrutiny board and the Environment and Development scrutiny board and finally Chairman of the Fire and Rescue scrutiny board.

District Councillor's Report for Barby and Onley Annual Parish Meeting

25 April 2016

This is my 16th annual report to you as your district councillor.

2015-2016 was a return to normal after my year as Chairman of the District Council. This year I have served on the Licensing Committee, the Member Training and Development Group, the Town Centre Working Group, on the Rugby Borough/Daventry District Crematorium Committee, which this year I chair, the A5 Member Partnership, and as the Council's observer on Northamptonshire ACRE's Board.

I will tell you briefly about the A5 Partnership, which is an influential group representing local authorities from Cannock in the north to South Northants, all sharing part of the A5. It aims to bring improvements to the A5 and to the surrounding areas by working with and bringing pressure on Highways England, which has responsibility for the road. The emphasis currently is on Magna Park, where expansion is planned, with dualling of the A5 and dedicated lorry parks. It is only too clear that the problems we face in this ward are the same as those further north, and at the last meeting, I called for a more comprehensive approach, where common problems can be tackled together rather than in isolation. The need for better improvements at the Lilbourne crossroads, and at Rugby SUE, DIRFT and further south, dealing with lorries in laybys and on sides of roads, litter, human excrement, speeding, rat runs are all common problems for communities on and adjacent to the A5. This was thoroughly aired, and the need for a concerted approach was accepted. As improvements in this area are currently scheduled for medium to long-term, 2020 – 2030, our next target will be to speed up this timetable, while Highways England is developing a new strategic plan. My concern for Barby is that proposed developments, DIRFT 3 and the 6200 houses on the Masts site, will add greatly to local traffic. Proposals for traffic management are inadequate, and, unless more is done, rat runs will inevitably develop, and we need to argue strongly to ensure Barby is not affected. Already traffic is increasing along Barby Lane and Onley Lane as Rugby develops.

I have attended and spoken at Strategy Group on matters which could have an impact on our villages. I have also spoken at Planning Committee in support of the village's views whenever a local application is being determined.

So to some of the major happenings at the District Council, on which I have reported regularly to the Parish Council. By April last year the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy had been adopted, and the Council had a 5.8 year land supply, which made it easier to resist unsuitably large planning applications in villages, including in this ward. The Neighbourhood Plan will further strengthen our ability to ensure that the village has control, rather than speculators. The current land supply at 1 April is 5.9 years. Work is advancing on the Local Plan, which will determine a hierarchy of villages detailing what development goes where, subject to adopted Neighbourhood Plans.

You will know the Council has started the process of changing the waste collection service. I find it strange that the consultation has been about a so-called option, as that implies an alternative. But there isn't one on the table, although the Council has considered 32 options, and residents can now only suggest tweaks. The original contract with Enterprise included managing the Country Park, open spaces, mowing, litter picking, and managing the Farmer's Market. The Farmers' Market has

virtually disappeared under Enterprise, there are constant complaints about litter and poor open space maintenance in the town. Enterprise is unable to meet its own recycling targets, and it is not surprising that new arrangements will have to be made for 2018. I am pleased to see the de-coupling of waste collection from the other elements of the contract, and my major concern is that there seems little flexibility in the 123-Option. What works in one part of our diverse district may not work as well elsewhere. Fly tipping could become an issue, particularly if the County Council closes some of its Household Recycling Centres.

Daventry Country Park retained its Green Flag status, and the Council won a national award for its environmental initiatives. These included the 'Don't Be A Tossler', the 'Clean up my Community' campaigns, and the new dog control orders. All very worthy and to be welcomed, but what about enforcement? I think the Council is going to struggle. I proposed that there should be a review of the Clean Up campaign in 18 months, which was accepted by Council.

After 80 years of lobbying work has started on the Flore bypass. However, in the 5th richest country in the world, villages have been asked to give their CIL monies to the £15 million cost. I understand they are willing to do so. After only 11 years we achieved a 50mph on the A361.

The Town Centre Vision struggles on. It now looks as if there will be an application for Site 1, behind the High Street, later this year. The town was promised a new library as the first step, but this looks increasingly unlikely. The plans for a supermarket and petrol station at the bottom of Ashby Road, Daventry, have been abandoned, because of changes in the retail market. Personally, I thought it was a bad idea, taking trade away from the town centre, and likely to cause congestion, so I am not sorry to see it go.

The Council has had 3 Big Energy Switch initiatives, which seem to be successful.

Braunston's Councillor Abigail Campbell and I promoted and held an interesting and successful seminar to address the lack of support by the Council for arts, culture and tourism. Progress is slow on this topic, but we hope to work through Daventry's Arts Festival.

To help its budgets, with the severe loss of Government money, the Council has worked on housing initiatives at Middlemore and has been selling some of its land. It is building new and refurbishing some of its old commercial premises. Money generating projects have been policy for 2 or 3 years now, but reserves are predicted to be used up by 2018-2020. As the Council has already sold its housing stock, let out its sports and leisure facilities, and no longer collects waste itself, direct services to residents are disappearing. What will be left for the District Council to deliver? One of the big issues on the horizon, but I won't deal with it tonight, is that of a larger unitary authority. There is no consensus about what this should look like and which authorities should join together, but it is on the agenda. I fear for democracy, as decision making will be taken even further away from you, your councillors will be fewer, covering a much bigger ward. But you will still have your Parish Council, which, who knows, may have even more powers.

To me, work in the ward is at least as important as what's happening at Daventry. Here the major community concern has been planning, but for individual residents I have dealt with problems as varied as environment, housing, roads, litter, noise, and have enjoyed listening to and helping you all.

Catherine Lomax, District Councillor, Barby and Kilsby Ward

Barby Annual Parish Meeting 2016

Barby Townlands and Educational Charity Report for 2015/16

During the year the charity welcomed Cat Sabine as our new Secretary and Rob Wilson as a trustee, having said farewell to Catherine Camp and to our previous chair, Peter Wright.

1. Events and Activities

- The website for the charity was improved and update by Ian Webb. It is accessed via the Parish Council website.
- Two benches commemorating the World Wars were installed near the War Memorial.
- The annual Apple Day was held in October, and many of the trees in the orchard have now been labelled.
- Leases for land owned by the charity have been renewed. These last for 21 years, in respect of the leases with the Parish Council for the Sports Field, Tennis Courts, and Playing Field, and for 25 years in respect of the Garage.
- The main paths on the allotments have been improved, and most of the old plum trees have been removed.
- Old copies of the minutes, together with other old documents, have been deposited in the County Record Office.
- The Midsummer Barbeque had to be cancelled because of poor weather. Luckily we were able to donated the burgers bought for that event to the Church Fete.
- A group of villagers joined Trustees to plant a patch of woodland on part of the arable land on Longdown Lane.

2. Organisations and Projects Awarded Grants

Churchyard Maintenance

Evergreens

WI

Barby Church Fete

Onley Football Teams

Barby Produce Show

Onley Park Youth Club
Barby Sports Pavilion
Village Christmas Tree
Barby History Group
Barby Pre-School
Barby Beavers and Cubs
Barby Primary School

3. Plans

- The Apple Day is scheduled for Sunday October 2nd.
- We have been awarded some seed to plant a wildflower meadow. We hope to join with villagers to create this new resource in the near future. We will be helped with advice from a member of the Garden Club.
- Having advertised the free allotment plots, we are arranging for those which are not yet taken to be strimmed and covered.

Sally Robbins 24.4.16

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