

Report for Annual Parish Meeting 2018

My report will deal in the main with the major activities and events of the year.

I will start with Planning. All three of this ward's villages now have, with Crick's successful referendum in January, an accepted Neighbourhood Development Plan, setting out the vision for development in the next 15 years. This will give much needed protection against opportunistic speculative planning applications which do not address local needs. The major planning concern for Onley Park during this year has been the proposal from Rugby Borough Council within its Local Plan to develop a so-called 'Garden Village', Lodge Farm, off the A45 opposite the entrance to Onley. Daventry District Council opposed this on the grounds of inadequate traffic analysis and impact upon our ward.

Daventry District Council has still this year been working on the Settlements and Countryside Local Plan for the whole district. Consultation has taken place on the draft, and it is expected to be adopted by 2019. The all-important housing land supply now stands at 6.3 years.

Although the District Council is not the Education Authority, it was instrumental in the setting up of the University Technical College in Daventry. Last year, little more than 3 years after its opening, the college has closed. It was never able to attract the number of pupils to make it viable. This year the Council has played a major part in the establishment of two other schools in the town; first, an all-age school for children with special needs, which takes pupils from throughout the county, and it is, I understand, fully subscribed, and second, a primary school, set to open later this year, on the new housing development at Monksmoor, part funded by the infrastructure levy paid to the Council by the builders.

The service we all receive from the Council is, of course, waste collection. While many people have found the present contractors satisfactory, this has not been a universal experience, and grounds maintenance and litter picking have been particularly criticised. As you now all know, we will have new contractors in June. This is Daventry Norse, a partnership with an organisation set up by Norfolk County Council, which already delivers a service to a number of local authorities. The details of the new 1-2-3 service are now being widely publicised, and, while some residents have voiced concerns about the changes to the collection routines, it should be much easier to recycle. I am a member of the joint Liaison Board for Daventry Norse, so should be well placed to take up any issues that might arise, but it seems that Norse is very willing to address and deal with problems.

A new initiative launched recently was the Local Lotto. Proceeds from this will go not just to the Council, but, more importantly, towards local voluntary and community organisations. Support for communities is an important function of the Council. The first draw takes place at the end of this week. In addition to the lottery funds, this year the Council agreed to double its grant budget for voluntary and community groups to £150,000 for three years, 2018-2021.

Among other initiatives during the year there have been the Big Switch, to enable households to find a better deal for its electricity supply, promoting the Good Neighbour Scheme to address the needs of the elderly and vulnerable in our communities, and encouraging

environmental improvements through the supply of free poppy and wildflower seeds. Plans are also in hand to celebrate the centenary of the ending of WW1. There is also an on-going project to review conservation areas and to consider new ones. Neither Barby nor Onley is under consideration.

Last summer the Council and Daventry town hosted the county Grand Depart of the Women's Cycling Tour. This brought visitors and money into the district, and the Council's bid to host this year's final county stage in June has been successful.

A major project for the Council over the last 14 years has been the expansion and regeneration of the town. Unfortunately, partly because of the economic crash in 2008, progress has been slow. Site 1, which would see the development of a new library, cinema, and shopping area behind High Street, has stalled, though it is still hoped for. Planning permission has been given for a retail and leisure area at the end of Ashby and Braunston Roads. Yet again, we have been told that a planning application is expected for the area to the east of the Country Park, which would see 4000 houses and communal facilities. The proposed canal arm linking Daventry to the Grand Union Canal has been vociferously opposed within the town. A new business plan to assess the viability of the project is now being drawn up.

The most significant event of the year has been the demise of the County Council. Commissioners are being sent in by the Government to run the authority, and the Minister for Local Government has expressed his preference for Northamptonshire to be organised into 2 unitary authorities, which would be responsible for all services within their area. We know that the county's 7 Districts and Boroughs have said they believe this is not the only option, but, whatever the outcome, there will be great change in the next two years.

Catherine Lomax

29.3.18

Report to the Parish Councils 2018 – County Councillor Malcolm Longley.

Yet another year has flown by and this particular one has been something of a roller coaster at County Hall which has been dominated by the financial position of the County Council. I will cover this topic in some detail in this report.

In the previous financial year of 2016-2017 there was a serious overspend, particularly in the adult care and child care budgets. In the previous year these deficits had been made good from the continuing sale of redundant properties owned by the County Council. This very controversial approach to balancing the annual accounts and making good any excess spending is by definition unsustainable in the long term as the County inevitably would be bound to use up all of its assets eventually.

Despite continuing opposition, from myself included, the then leadership continued upon this course of action until finally one key asset could not be realised in time for the year end and the newly appointed financial officer issued a 114 notice. The issuing of a 114 notice is a very important act and effectively stops the authority from spending any more revenue unless authorised by the chief financial officer.

Events then moved rapidly as a government inspector was appointed who confirmed the advice and further proposed that the County Council be disbanded along with the seven district and borough councils and two Unitary councils be formed in their place. The elections for these two Unitary Councils are likely to be held in May 2020 and will consist of around forty-seven councillors each. Following the issuing of the inspectors report the leader of the council resigned and a new leader, Matt Golby was appointed, who began realigning the council with the reports findings by removing a large number of the existing cabinet and replacing them with new members.

Regarding my new County role, I have again been appointed as an assistant to the cabinet which means that I am included in the new cabinet meetings, discussions etc. and I now have taken on various projects associated with the financial issues that have been assigned to me. As well as a voice at the table, this role gives me a clear insight into the detailed working of the new council cabinet and most importantly the financial arrangements. I will continue to keep you up to date as events unfold.

Fortunately the local infra-structure has not been allowed to suffer unduly as these programmes are funded on a capital, not revenue basis and the cost of borrowing for local authorities is very competitive. So, where it is believed that capital investment is the right thing to do for the longer term benefit of the county this policy has been adopted. Some of the good outcomes which are noticeable are 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 which just commenced.

Regarding my personal involvement, I continue to try maintaining as much contact with the Parishes as I can but I am bound to confess that this year's events at County hall have consumed very much more of my time and energy than in previous years. However there have been a number of successes notably via the empowerment fund which I have strived to divide equally across the various Parishes and it is now regularly oversubscribed thanks mainly to effective councils and bright clerks. I have tried to ensure that the fund is rationed fairly and used in areas that are usually short of cash and where a £500 contribution is well received – for example pre-school groups. In addition, I also try to ensure that the projects meet with the Parish Council's approval although unfortunately this fund is likely to be either suspended or removed in this coming year.

Finally, I have enjoyed the last year as your representative at County hall and hope that I have made an adequate contribution to the district.

Barby Townlands and Educational Charity: Report for the Parish Meeting April 16th 2018

The Charity was originally formed from an amalgamation of small local charities which dated back to the nineteenth century and before. It has land, property and investments, and uses the funds from these to provide grants to local organisations which are based in the parish and/or serve parishioners. The charity takes the management and conservation of its assets seriously, both in order to conserve them for the future, and to improve the amenities in the village. Further information about the charity is available on the website page linked to the Parish Council site. The minutes of all our meetings are published there.

2017/2018

Grants

In 2017 a range of grants, totalling around four and a half thousand pounds, were given to support local initiatives. The bids came from organisations such as the Pre-school, the School, Cubs and Beavers, the History and Gardening clubs, the Evergreens, the WI, and the Church. This year so far, we also have made grants in support of Cricket and Tennis in the village. Our next meeting is tomorrow, and there are grant bids totalling over £9000 for our consideration.

Other Activities

- With the help of Bernard Scott, improvements have been made to the new woodland planted by villagers off Longdown Lane two years ago. Rare native black poplars and an elm tree have been added.
- Further improvements are being made to the allotments provided by the Charity. Most plots are taken, but a few remain vacant.
- More bulbs were planted around the village in the autumn, and poppy seeds will be planted this spring.
- The possibility of having an annual Barby Festival is under discussion. The Charity will give financial support if the plan goes forward.
- A recent initiative has been to invite school leavers to apply for a grant from the Charity to support their career development.

Sally Robbins, Trustee