



Minutes of Cottingham's Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 18th May 2022 at 7pm at Cottingham Village Hall Annex, Berryfield Road, Cottingham.

Attendees: Cllr G West-Robinson (Chair)
Ms R Raj (Clerk)
18 other residents of Cottingham

1. Welcome from the Chair of Cottingham Parish Council (CPC)

Cllr West-Robinson welcomed everyone to the meeting, gave an explanation of the meeting's legacy and objectives, and listed the community-active groups, organisations and individuals who have agreed to share news and experiences of the past year during the meeting.

2. Report from Chair of Cottingham Parish Council ("CPC").

Cllr West-Robinson shared a report, written for this meeting, which described the work and accomplishments of CPC during the past year. In particular he explained that much of the council's work is carried out by sub-committees, working groups and portfolio roles, all of whom provided reports to the recent Annual Parish Council Meeting. The minutes of this meeting, and all the reports, can be found on the Parish Council's website (details at the bottom of these minutes).

3. 2021/22 Financial Statement from Parish Clerk.

The Clerk provided summary information of CPC's income and expenditure as follows:

- 1st April 2021 Opening Balance: £19,893.31
- To 31st March 2022 receipts to bank: £27,861.85 - This is made up of Precept from NNC, Grants, VAT reclaim from previous year and paid invoices.
- To 31st March 2022 expenditure: £23,996.92 - This includes, grass cutting, insurance, village maintenance, employment & training costs, Dale maintenance, subscriptions etc.
- Balance at 31st March 2022: £23,758.24 - Includes a grant received of £4,265 received during the financial year which is assigned to a project but not yet spent.

4. Reports and highlights from community-active groups or individual present.

Richard Hague represented the Village Store and Café.

- Richard expressed sincere thanks on behalf of the committee to the all the volunteers and staff who work in the shop.
- Also, to those who, during COVID and lockdown, stepped in to help keep the shop open.
- Recently completed: AGM over Zoom, Licensing, Financial return, Stock taking, Fire, Health and Safety certificates and allergy reports on products sold.
- COVID grant received from Corby Council of £10,000 has been used to renew a chiller and update the flooring in the shop. The shop has also been painted by volunteers.

- Become a member of Plunkit, which give help and advice for the committee
- Shareholders AGM is set for Tuesday 7th June 6pm and a new plan is being proposed.
- The shop is always looking for more volunteers as it has 10 shifts a week to cover.

Mike Curtis represented Village Hall Management Committee.

- COVID grant received from Corby Council of £10,000. This has been spent on a new boiler and electrical testing and renewal.
- A financial audit has been completed
- Committee has not met fully for 2 years but, with new members now appointed, will convene imminently.
- Thanks, expressed to the Treasurer who is running the bookings, cleaning and keeping the hall going.
- Hoping to increase the events in the hall in future to raise some money toward the upkeep of this vital community facility

Mike Curtis also represented the Copyholders.

- The Copyholders who date back to 1556, started to look after land from the Manor house from 1790.
- The Jury (as the members are known) consists of 12 members of which there are currently 9.
- They manage 15 acres at the junction of A427 and A6003 and 0.7 acres on Ashley Road.

Angela Preston-Jones spoke on behalf St Mary Magdalene Church.

- The church welcomed a new vicar, Rev. Amanda Oliver, in 2021.
- Amanda has 7 local churches in 6 parishes in her benefice.
- As with other organisations, popular and high-profile events such as the nativity walk, as well as congregational services, could not take place for much of the covid period.
- Amanda has been working with the village primary school to launch schemes such as 'Messy Church' and 'Church in the Park', and has other plans for more new groups.
- Service in Cottingham every 4th Sunday.
- The PCC team is small, and it is therefore always a challenge to keep on top of even the essential maintenance tasks such as leaking roof, bell tower repairs, broken fencing, path repairs, church yard mowing and strimming etc...
- The lack of parking, toilet facilities and funds restrict what the PCC would like to do to further develop the Church's role as a centre for fellowship, ministry and resource for the community.
- However, they managed to pay the £8,850 Parish Share required of them by the Diocese of Peterborough in December.

Dianne Sharvill represented the Valley Voice Choir and explained that:

- The choir was about to celebrate its 10 years anniversary when COVID hit.
- The choir, which originally comprised mainly local residents, has attracted lots of new members from a wider local area since coming out of Covid restrictions.
- The weekly rehearsal venue, which used to be the Methodist Church school hall, is now the Cottingham school hall. The Village Hall Annex proved to be too small to accommodate the number of members now attending.
- Some fund raising was completed at Christmas for Lakelands Hospice and Air ambulance.
- Upcoming performances include the veteran tea party at school, Jubilee big lunch and the delayed 10th anniversary.

John Hinton spoke on behalf of Tracey and himself about 'their boys' the Alpacas.

- The alpacas have settled into the village and have been here for 10 months.
- A coffee morning to raise money for MacMillian Cancer Support was attended by 400 people attend and raised £1700. A truly staggering result!
- They have had visitors from an Adult Educations Centre, WI groups, Antizyme's, Nursing home residents and lots of regular local visitors and children who love to get up close and hand feed the boys.
- More fund raising is planned, and also a Jubilee coffee morning on Friday 3rd June.
- They confirmed that they have Public Liability insurance in place and are looking to develop more facilities in the field.

Steve Morphy spoke about the village maintenance completed on behalf of the Parish Council.

- Cutting the grass and keeping some of the paths clear, repairs to damaged seats, monitoring for risks to security and safety of residents.
- He raised the issue of some dog owners still not clearing up and disposing properly of their dogs' mess. The meeting discussed this anti-social behavior problem and, whilst acknowledging that most dog owners do behave responsibly in this regard, expressed disgust at the minority who let the others down.

Jane Smith updated us on her work with the village website, Facebook page and newsletter.

- Updating both villages of Cottingham and Middleton with news and information every fortnight digitally via emails and online, and producing a printed newsletter every 2 months.
- The number of subscribers to the emailed digital format increased in lockdown to 335.
- Thanks to the both Parish Councils for paying for the newsletter printing, and all the distributors who deliver it voluntarily. [**Chair's note:** In case you didn't know, Jane does all the newsletter editing and production functions, and all the Facebook and website postings, voluntarily. Thank you, Jane].
- Fully GDPR compliant
- Over 1000 Facebook members and active on both village WhatsApp groups to keep villages up-to-date.

David Grayson spoke on behalf of the East Carlton Walking Group.

- The local walking group was started by Corby Borough Council in conjunction with the NHS.
- Walks take place on a Monday and Wednesday morning from East Carlton Park and, pre-covid, regularly attracted 40-50 people. Post covid, numbers are currently slightly lower but it is hoped that this will rise to previous levels over the next year.
- There is a choice of walking distances through Cottingham and Middleton.
- There is a significant and well attended social aspect to membership of this group.

Karen Reuby represented the Friends of Green Spaces Group ('FrOGS').

- A new group initiated by, and under the auspices of, Cottingham Parish Council comprising residents of both Cottingham and Middleton.
- Aim to improve the look, biodiversity and pollinator resource of the many and varied green spaces around the village.
- Contact has been made with the Woodland trust, NNC and Cottingham School.

Michael Day runs a small painting group in the village

- It began when he was asked to help a few residents with some art classes
- More have now joined the group and Michael has a full complement of members (as measured by how many can sit round his kitchen table!)
- The group is considering a small exhibition in the summer to share their work.

Sue Dixon, the Parish Council's Footpath Warden, submitted a report but there was not time to convey its contents to the meeting. The main points of the report are:

- As can be seen by my monthly itemed report all footpaths are generally in good condition.
- Whenever necessary, raised issues are attended to quickly and effectively such as cutting back overgrowth, repairing styles, and erecting signage.
- The majority of dog walkers do clean up after their dogs... the 'dog poo' issue in the village is down to a very few irresponsible dog owners.
- I wonder if a few more seats could be put on the footpaths or the old Harborough Road or the top of the Dale - many people do stop to look at our spectacular countryside views.
- All in all Cottingham should be very proud of our beautiful countryside and the vast variety of walks available. Happy Walking

Christine West-Robinson, a committee member of the Ashley Welland Valley WI, also submitted a report whose contents the meeting did not have time to hear. The main points of her report are:

- A significant number of the Ashley Welland Valley WI branch members are Cottingham residents, who make up half of the branch committee.
- Our events during the last year have included speakers on a wide array of subjects such as gardening, wildlife, conservation, dancing, history and many other subjects. We even had a talk by the wig maker of Madame Tussauds!
- During the Covid period we continued to meet via Zoom, with speakers such as a historian from Hampton Court and a Burlesque Dance teacher. Yes, we really did get off our chairs and gyrate in front of our computer cameras!
- We have also had some great afternoon social events and activities from walks and garden visits to craft sessions
- Once a month we contribute to the Corby Food Bank, and have donated clothes and personal items to the Afghan women refugee appeal in Northamptonshire.
- We joined in the 'Show The Love' campaign to highlight the problems and issue of climate change. You may have seen our display in the Village Store and Café window.

David and Paula Love host the Cottingham Neighbourhood Watch WhatsApp group. Unfortunately, they both had work commitments the evening of the meeting but they did contact us to express their support for the plan to hold such a broad-based meeting, and will try to attend next year's.

Full reports from the majority of the individuals, groups and organisations listed above will shortly be posted onto the Parish Councils Website: www.cottingham-northants-pc.org.uk

Meeting closed at 9.05pm

Signed Chairman _____

Date _____