



Lassington Oak

Highnam Parish Council

Highnam ~ Linton ~ Over ~ Lassington

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting, held on 4 May 2021

Present: Parish Councillors – M Welch (Chairman), V Tustin Smith (Vice Chairman),
W Badham, K Emmerson, R Keene, C Coats, W Nicol

In attendance: R Hicks (Clerk), and 19 members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence: Cllr J Smith, Cllr P Awford, S Doyle(NHW), J Rosam(Williams Andrews Foundation), PCSO Amber Jenkins

2. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28March 2019

The minutes, which have been available in the Parish Office and on the parish web-site, were approved and signed by Chairman

3. Police Report

CC Incident Comparison Statistics For Parish Council
Period : 02APR2020 - 01APR2021 Compared With 01APR2019 - 01APR2020
Parish : 133

Parish=Highnam

Result Group 1	Result 1	02APR2020 to 01APR2021	01APR2019 to 01APR2020	+/-	% Diff
NICL Asb	ASB - Personal	17	5	12	240.0%
NICL Asb	ASB - Nuisance	35	11	24	218.2%
NICL Asb	ASB - Environmental	11	3	8	266.7%
NICL Crime	Crime - other	24	18	6	33.33%
NICL Crime	Violence against the person	5	6	-1	(16.67%)
NICL Crime	Sexual offences	1	4	-3	(75.00%)
NICL Crime	Burglary non dwelling	2	0	2	0.00%
NICL Crime	Burglary dwelling	3	8	-5	(62.50%)
NICL Crime	Theft of motor vehicle	3	1	2	200.0%
NICL Crime	Criminal damage	7	5	2	40.00%
NICL Crime	Drugs	1	2	-1	(50.00%)
NICL Crime	Fraud/forgery/deception	6	2	4	200.0%
NICL Crime	Robbery	0	1	-1	0.00%
NICL Crime	Theft - other	4	6	-2	(33.33%)
NICL Crime	Theft from motor vehicle	5	3	2	66.67%
NICL Admin	Messages inc press release	45	58	-13	(22.41%)
NICL Admin	Lost or found Property or animals	1	3	-2	(66.67%)
NICL Admin	Complaint against police	9	3	6	200.0%
NICL Admin	Police generated resource activity	6	14	-8	(57.14%)
NICL Admin	Pre-planned event	0	2	-2	0.00%
NICL Public Safety	Alarm - False	1	0	1	0.00%
NICL Public Safety	Alarm - False Personal Attack	0	2	-2	0.00%
NICL Public Safety	Sudden death	1	0	1	0.00%
NICL Public Safety	Susp. Circs./Insecure veh./prems.	45	39	6	15.38%
NICL Public Safety	Civil dispute-not btw neighbours	1	2	-1	(50.00%)
NICL Public Safety	Abandoned call inc silent 999	12	10	2	20.00%
NICL Public Safety	Concern for safety	53	40	13	32.50%
NICL Public Safety	Domestic incident - non crime	9	5	4	80.00%
NICL Public Safety	Natural disaster/incident/warning	1	0	1	0.00%
NICL Public Safety	Missing Person	2	5	-3	(60.00%)
NICL Public Safety	Animals/Wildlife	10	9	1	11.11%
NICL Road/Traffic	Rtc_damage only(inc animal rtc)	25	55	-30	(54.55%)
NICL Road/Traffic	Highway disruption	103	91	12	13.19%
NICL Road/Traffic	Road related offence	59	74	-15	(20.27%)
NICL Road/Traffic	RTC Death / Injury	2	13	-11	(84.62%)
=		509	500	9	1.80%

Excludes Not An Incident. Excludes Duplicate Incident

Includes only incidents with primary result group of A, B, C, M, P, R or W

4. Neighbourhood Watch Report

The role of NHW is to have in place a structure for neighbours to support each other by keeping an eye on each other's property and belongings, reporting incidents that may upset the ambience of the area and the circulation of information received from the Police or their neighbours

NHW is arranged around NHW Street coordinators who take on responsibility for a small number of properties in the area where they live. This is usually 10 to 15 properties

Over the past 18 months, there has been a higher than usual turnover of Street Coordinators. Despite efforts to find replacements with door-to-door mail shots, this has meant that the number of active schemes has been reduced from 40 to 36 and the number of homes in Highnam with a street Coordinator is now down to 711 as compared to 807 in March 2019.

The Alert System, which replaced the old Police Watchword System has now settled down and is functioning very well. All Alert messages are now received by email and no longer by telephone. Most of the Street Coordinators in Highnam have set up their own closed user email groups to share information received with those neighbours who are prepared to provide the coordinator with their email details.

During the past 18 months, there has been an increase in theft from homes and vehicles in the Parish along with outbreaks of anti-social behaviour. Arrests have been made and cautions given where appropriate. The increase in the number of home security systems around the village has contributed to assisting the Police to identify the miscreants involved.

PCSOs regularly carry out patrols in Highnam subject to operational availability and conformance with Covid restrictions. Notwithstanding, reported crime in Highnam is still well below the County average.

The NHW Newsletter prepared by the West Gloucestershire NHW Association usually delivered twice yearly has not been possible as door to door deliveries by Street Coordinators has not been permitted under Covid rules.

The grants received from Parish Councils, of which Highnam PC was one, to fund the newsletters, has meant that the Association has instead set aside the accrued funds for use when it is possible to return to normal and used for training, newsletters and administration.

As I shall reach the age of 80 next year, I have again indicated to both the Parish Council and the Police that it was my wish to step down as the Highnam NHW Key Coordinator. However, as no replacement volunteer has come forward, it has been necessary for me to continue.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the coordinators in Highnam, the Police, Rural Beat Officer and the PCSOs who regularly patrol Highnam and who respond quickly to our problems.

5. Chairman's Report

There was no report in 2020 because of restrictions imposed on Council business by the severity of the problems facing Councillors during two most unusual years.

In April 2019 Tewkesbury Borough Council – in subsequent paragraphs to be referred to as TBC- were engaged in drafting agreements regarding land it owned which was important because the outcome would have to be accounted for regarding our proposed new Parish Plan. The Variation Agreement regarding Section 106 monies had still not been received from TBC and in May TBC were undergoing a Judicial Review at Birmingham High Court regarding the five-year land supply. A Judgement was to follow in July stating TBC only had a 4.33 year supply in hand.

In June Borough Councillors Jill Smith and Paul McLain provided a report to Council where reference was made to TBC's 4.3 year land supply and an application from developers to build 800 homes at Fiddington plus 10,000 homes at Ashchurch and a potential 3000 home garden village west of Cheltenham.

Nothing much to report in July other than audit matters and the Fiddington development application had been rejected. Footpaths, hedges and grass cutting were discussed at length.

September was the month when a serious examination of the existing NDP revealed weakness and dangers regarding rogue development and subsequent planning applications being submitted to TBC and so it was decided to upgrade the existing NDP into a document with strength and teeth to fight off building plans that did not accord with wishes of Highnam residents. Rumours regarding speculative developers were circulating so the need for immediate funding to create a new NDP needed investigation.

October? Well apart from the usual hedges, weeds, dog waste- bins and footpaths nothing much happened other than a donation to Wild Highnam was granted and TBC admitted to a shortfall in land supply, and it became apparent that a strengthened NDP was now a crucial priority.

In November Richard reported that a meeting was being arranged with agents representing Mr E Keene – now with the gift of hindsight we know to have been Gladmans. TBC were going to take on responsibility for The Recreation Ground project and relevant papers were exchanged.

On to 2020 when Mr Tagg The Practice Manager from Lassington Lane Surgery attended to discuss parking problems. He hoped there would be improvements by June when building work would be completed. Representatives from FC Highnam attended too to discuss parking problems and possible solutions affecting the roadway adjacent to the playing field. The Parish precept was set at £40,000 and the proposal was carried. Still waiting for TBC to complete the paperwork in order to set the main project to go. A proposal to engage with Neighbourhood Plan regarding renewal of the NDP was carried. In February The Reverend Helen Sammon attended and asked for financial assistance to help provide equipment that was needed by the recently engaged Young Families Worker. Councillor Awford mentioned the possibility of there being a planning application submitted for the building of 5000 house at Westbury on Severn. Funding for an enhanced NDP could be sought from Locality and 'My Neighbourhood Plan', in other words Ms Clara Yeung was engaged after a proposal was carried. Once again, a large vehicle had damaged the grass verge outside The Post Office and a discussion centred on possible solutions to the problem.

March! When the horrors relating to The Corona Virus began to become apparent. TBC's element of The Council Tax was to rise by £5. The Planning Group met with Gladmans regarding possible development on Edward Keene's land – an aggressive application due to TBC's lack of land supply. The matter was to be discussed at an additional Council Meeting to be arranged for the 31st of March. Richard met with highway representatives to discuss dissatisfaction with some supposed remedial work.

The first of many Zoom meetings was held in April and Borough Councillor Smith gave a report about all the precautions and assistance provisions that were being organised by TBC regarding The Corona epidemic. Richard spoke about the necessary legislation which had to be passed enabling Parish Council meetings to be held virtually and a demand for improvements to the A417 had been put forward by adjacent Councils regarding the severe flooding which had occurred. An initial NDP plan was almost ready to put before The Council.

In May it was proposed that David Crofts be asked to help regarding the NDP and Contact with Gladmans should be maintained.

June saw the co-option of Borough Councillor Jill Smith and Bill Nichols onto The Council and Councillor Awford gave notification of the intended upgrade of the B4215 from the A40 junction to the junction with Oakridge in August. No news from Gladmans and concerns about three sites mentioned in The Local Plan regarding Highnam. David Crofts is to be asked to analyse The Local Plan and Matt Barker has responded while Locality has approved a grant of 60% of the NDP costs.

In July Councillor Awford Said the B4215 work was now rescheduled for September. Staunton Hill Tree planting requests: lack of action on unkempt pathways and Joint Core Strategy refresh and update to be presented to Borough Councillors on the 31st of July. The Parish Council website must be compliant with Website Accessibility Regulations by the end of September.

September and the B4125 upgrade is to start on the 17th of the month. A plaque commemorating Derek Davies' long service to The Council has been ordered. Councillor Mathieson regrets he must tender his resignation from The Council after suffering a severe illness with continuing complications. A grant of £1000 was awarded to the newly... formed Good Neighbourhood scheme so the volunteers can continue the good work in Highnam.

October and The Government White Paper on housing was being scrutinised by The Planning Group while notification of a possible development of 5000 plus houses on behalf of The Forest of Dean Council was received by The Churcham Parish Council chairman: it appeared quite possible that a significant number of the proposed houses would actually need to be built inside Highnam's Parish boundary. Councillor Coats will represent the interests of Highnam. Once again parking problems regarding attendance at fixtures organised by FC Highnam were discussed and possible solutions suggested.

November and the last addition to my report because Councillors will not need reminding of business transacted in 2021 because items dealt with will be easily recalled so near to The Annual Council Meeting. Rees Keene was co-opted onto The Council. Councillor Awford described the severe consequences arising from The Coronavirus pandemic and how it was affecting Gloucester County Council and the provision of essential services during this lockdown. It has meant the closing of libraries, day centres and the stoppage of visiting to care centres. He continued to work closely regarding matters affecting Highnam. Councillor Smith described the provision of emergency grants, care for the elderly people and much more relating to the difficulties of keeping essential services going when many members of The Council Staff were forced to work from home. Richard was engaged in discussions with TBC in order to formulate a working document regarding EWG projects. Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators needed to supervise The Range. Lassington Lane/Mary Grove gate and enough is enough so all I need to do is to thank Richard for all the most valuable work he has done over eight years on behalf of Highnam Parish Council and for guiding me in all matters during my chairmanship. His services to The Council will be sorely missed but. However, Jo Badham will take over as clerk and I wish her all the very best. So Councillors my very last duty as chairman is to thank you all very much for everything you do for the residents of Highnam and a very special thanks to Councillor Coats for all his most valuable contributions guiding and working so very hard during all the Planning ups and downs affecting Highnam Parish.

6. District Councillor's Report

This is a brief report, following on from the monthly regular reports you receive from Jill and Paul your Borough Councillors. Throughout the last year one or both of us have endeavoured to attend you Parish Council meetings, and sent or verbally gave you a report on activities of interest going on in Tewkesbury Borough area. We have also been available to many Parishioners to help with their concerns and give advice. We have been a support to our Parish Councils and clerks, providing a valuable link to TBC.

The monthly regular reports from us are in addition to the ones you receive from Pete Edgar at TBC and the Press releases from the Communications Department, that go to your Parish Clerks.

It has been a busy year for the Council, supporting and administrating varies Businesses and individuals with help and Grants. This continues with the Council focusing on economic and social recovery, and looking at lessons learned. There are now Restart grants in addition to help the Borough encourage people out and to visit the area. This will help boost Tourism and hospitality in Tewkesbury Borough Area.

TBC are in the early stages of a planning review by the Transform Working Group. We will feedback as soon as we know more. We will be monitoring and engaging in the process. This will be helped by returning to the offices in the near future.

We have welcomed communications within the Ward and hope to continue with this liaison in the coming year.

7. County Councillor's Report

Cllr Awford was unable to provide a report for the meeting due to the impending County Council elections, and the rules of Purdah.

8. Highnam Community Centre Trust

The last 12 months have seen the second biggest challenge to the running of the three halls in the past decade. However, due to the existing Business Continuity Plan and reserve funds, along with grants from Central Government via Tewksbury Borough Council we have been able to weather the Covid-19 storm and come out of it stronger.

I must pay special thanks to the Bookings Manager, Bill Hawkes and the Caretaker, Mark Stock for all the excellent work they have put in over the last year to keep the halls safe and where possible open. I hope all our users will notice the improvements that Mark and Bill have made.

Thanks to the outstanding efforts of the trustees Martyn Ridge and Bob Train the Old School renovation project will start this year. Without Martyn's project management excellence and Bob's fund raising endeavours we would not be in the position to significantly improve the facilities we have for the community.

As the lockdown is phased out we will be able to reopen the halls to all business, groups and private bookings and I would encourage all to check the Covid-19 safe provisions we have made as detailed on our website highnamcc.org.uk.

9. William Andrews Foundation Report

In his will, dated 4th November 1837, William Andrews endowed the dividends of £650 to his daughters, then to his grandson and following his death the dividends were "*to go to the parish of Lassington near the City of Gloucester, to be received by them yearly for ever to be given to some person to learn the poor children of that Parish to read and write*"

Originally 3 Trustees were appointed by Gloucestershire County Council and two by Lassington Parish Meeting. The Scheme has changed over the years to include the Parish of Highnam and in 2015 the County Council severed its interest in the Foundation. Now all 5 trustees are appointed by Highnam Parish Council immediately following elections. The Trustees are currently: Mrs Sheila Humble, Mrs Josie Smith, Mrs Sarah Smith, Mrs Joyce Dole and Col Edward Felton.

The emphasis is still on educational grants, for those in financial need, and recently grants have been made for a university based diploma and whole class music lessons at the primary school. The Foundation has a small amount of money to disburse and usually meets to discuss grants in July of each year. It was unable to hold its AGM in 2020 but requests for grants were circulated among the Trustees and agreed. The accounts were also agreed and the annual return made to the Charity Commission. The Foundation publicises the availability of such grants mainly through The Link, the Parish Council website and noticeboard and Mrs Humble has regular contact with the primary school. In the case of grants to individuals and families, the Foundation's discussions and decisions are confidential.

The trustees are pleased to invite any resident of Highnam who would like to discuss the possibility of a grant being made to contact either the Secretary, Jean Rosam (416946) or the Foundation's Chairman, Mrs Sheila Humble (526556).

10. Questions from Floor

Comments were made - regarding Parish Council paying for a contractor to take a weed spraying course; a sent Email which was not adequately answered; why additional

contractors were paid to mow pollinator patches in order to save seeds; excessive amounts paid out for grounds maintenance.

Criticism made of NDP questionnaire, and poor communications. It was admitted that there were faults and deficiencies.

Concern was expressed that comment on building plans was being sought with no detail provided.

Q was asked if a planning application is received, with the answer that TBC will decide on the application.

Q was asked what allowances will be made to allow for the deficiencies in the NDP survey with A that the detail had not been discussed but allowances will be made.

Comment that there appeared to be no clear plan from PC on future housing, with plans constantly shifting, questioning the need for an update to the NDP. An answer was given that it is Government advice that Plans are kept updated.

Q was asked as to what Land Supply figures actually mean, with an answer that all Councils have to show an availability of land for housing needs. The Highnam NDP is weak and developers are waiting to pounce at every opportunity; Parish Council needs to be constructive and have a vision for the future.

Comment made that bungalows must be included at the design stage, and Council are aware of this need from the Glos Local Housing Needs Assessment.

It was suggested that communications could be improved.

Another question was posed as to whether future developments would be restricted to the needs of Highnam residents.

The meeting closed at 8.27pm.

Signed _____

Date _____