

April 2015

THE PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report

The Council – Membership

At the start of the 2014/15 year the Parish Council had a full complement of 9 Councillors. In May I was elected Chairman and Cllr Fi Burge was elected Vice Chairman. Midway through the year Cllr Jake Shuckburgh retired from the Council and as we approach the elections Cllr Richard Hoddinott and Cllr James Belcher have decided not to stand for re-election. I would like to thank all three for their hard work and contribution for the Parish Council over the past few years.

The local elections are due to be held on 7 May 2015 and the remaining 6 members will stand for re-election. As the full complement is nine members the 6 candidates will be automatically re-elected.

However there are 3 vacancies and we would welcome new members. The main qualification is an interest in the village community. The Parish Council meets on the first Monday of every month, except January and August – meetings last less than two hours! If interested please contact the clerk – (07887 548774 or Sadie.Patamia@aynho.org) - Joining is not difficult as new members can easily be co-opted by existing members of the Parish Council.

Planning

The full list of all planning applications is shown below this report. Most residents will be aware that Mr James Perkins was given permission by SNC to build 3 houses and a heritage centre on the site at Aynhoe Corner as part of an enabling scheme which would also see the restoration of the park land and walls. The proposal also envisages the villagers will have access to the Aynhoe Corner site after completion of the scheme as an area in which to walk. Construction is likely to start in about 6 weeks on the houses. There are a number of planning conditions regarding the restoration of the avenues and general area which are currently being undertaken. The project will bring to an end the long period of neglect and uncertainty surrounding this part of the village.

During the year SNC reviewed the Village Conservation area and questioned whether The Glebe should be retained within the Conservation area. When built The Glebe was seen as a particularly important and well-designed example of social housing. The PC fought to maintain the existing conservation areas and I am delighted SNC agreed. Whilst this does impose some planning restrictions on future development it is important that the visual heritage integrity is maintained.

Website & Communications

During the year Cllr Leslie Leighton designed and developed a new website for the village which went live in November. It is designed to cover all village activity – not just the activities of the Parish Council. You will also find copies of all the village newsletters on the site. Images are a key part of the new look and feel and there is also now a twitter account! You will also notice a new village logo at the top of this report.

I am also grateful to Jill Wightman who has helped with uploading much of the content to the site. If you have not seen it please do visit www.aynho.org. During the next year it is intended to provide village businesses with the opportunity to have a presence on the site.

I would also like to thank Lawrence Wilkinson for his support and work with the previous website.

Finally the Parish Clerk maintains a list of emails for e-communications. If you do not get these emails please let Sadie have your email Sadie.Patamia@aynho.org - it is not passed onto 3rd parties.

Defibrillator

£4000 has been raised via the Winter Lunch Club (WLC) and from donations from villagers which will be used to install two defibrillators within the village. For those who are unsure: "The automated external defibrillator (AED) has been described as the single most important development in the treatment of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). These devices are now widely available and increasingly used by people, often with little or no training, to re-start the heart of a victim of SCA. Under ideal circumstances, when used very soon after collapse (within two or three minutes), many can survive." The first has been purchased and will shortly be installed on the outside of the Village Hall. The idea to install a Defibrillator came from Amanda Limb who suggested the profits of the WLC should be used. Of the £4000 raised £2632.54 was from the WLC. The Parish Council supported the initiative, covering the rent for the Village Hall and the Public Liability insurance for the WLC and will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the defibrillators. I would like to thank Amanda and her team for the idea and the funds raised.

Gigaclear

You will all be aware that the village has been given the opportunity for Ultrafast Fibre Broadband to be installed by Gigaclear. We quickly reached the 30% level of interest which was then converted into actual orders required by Gigaclear to commit to the installation. Work to install the fibre network is scheduled to start on 20 April and should be finished by end of July. A 'pot' (slightly smaller than a water meter) will be installed at the boundary of all properties within the village even if you have not placed an order. It will mean that trenches will have to be dug around the village to facilitate the network. The schedule of works will be published on the village website and there will be direct notification of works. Please note that during the project some trenches will be immediately backfilled – but may not look as though they are finished – rest assured they will be by the end of the project! This is a wonderful opportunity to have Broadband fit for the 21st century - and I would ask you to be patient whilst the infrastructure is installed.

Maintenance

The visual appearance of our village is one of the characteristics that residents most appreciate and is one the council attempts to maintain. There is limited assistance from NCC – but in the main it is our responsibility. I would ask that everyone can where possible help with the public areas near to their own homes. The 2 village clean ups, one in March and one in October to co-inside with the community weekend, are part of this effort. My appreciation to those who have helped in the past - but we could always do a better job if there were a few more volunteers! If you are aware of areas which need attention do please either contact the Parish Clerk or go online and google 'Streetdoctor SNC' and follow the links to report the problems directly. You will be surprised how quickly they can respond in some instances!

Parking

Parking, or rather than lack of parking within the conservation area of the village, remains a problem. Discussions have taken place with the Highways Department of NCC – but the bottom line is that it is really up to us as a village to solve the problems and thus this severely restricts our options due to the potential costs involved.

It was clear from the Village Survey that villagers would like to see the Village Green, outside the Cartwright Arms, improved and the constant damage from parked cars prevented. The Parish Council has decided to re-install posts around The Green to protect it. At the same time the Church Parochial Council has agreed that some of the space, on a trial basis, within the Church car park can be made available for residents in return for a small donation. Please contact the Clerk if interested.

During the year parking restrictions were imposed with the installation of yellow lines to improve the flow of traffic near the junction of Banbury Road and Charlton Road.

Finally when parking on the public roads it is requested that residents park considerately and do not park in such a way that it may impede emergency vehicle access (fire and ambulance).

Children’s Playground

During the year Cllr Fi Burge’s hard work saw the completion and opening of the new Playground. The project was in the end self-funding via the Virador grant and village donations.

Thanks

Finally I would like to conclude by thanking, firstly, the officials of the Parish Council – namely Sadie Patamia, Clerk, and Roger Wertheimer, RFO, for their hard work during the past year. Lastly I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their contribution and support during the year - which is much appreciated.

Stephen Brook
Chairman
 01869 811167

Finance

At 31 March 2015 the Parish Council had £19217.66 in its bank account (excludes ASRA as not available at time of printing) and assets to the value of £121,378. The precept for 2015/16 is £21,388 towards a budget of £26,345. Internal and External Auditors approved the 2013/14 accounts during the year. The accounts are available for inspection under the usual rules for public funds.

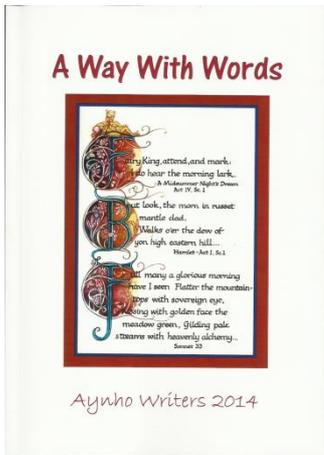
Planning

This year Aynho Parish Council has considered the following planning applications:

| Address | Outline of application | PC Decision | SNC Decision |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------|--------------|
| Upper Aynho Grounds Bicester Road | Extension on north elevation of The Great Barn | Supported | Approved |
| The Grammar House Croughton Road | Enlarge fireplace in the kitchen and add a wood burning stove to existing fireplace in dining room. | Supported | Approved |
| 5 The Square | Demolition of single storey front extension and wooden porch and replacement with a two-and-a-half-storey front extension. Erection of single storey side extension. Insert two dormer windows to front and three rooflights to rear. Removal of rear window at ground/first floor level and replacement with two new windows at first and ground floor level. Removal of existing white UPVC windows and replacement with metal framed windows. Removal of UPVC rainwater goods with painted cast iron rainwater goods. Removal of existing front door and replace with casement window. Removal of existing front door in porch and block up doorway. Replace concrete roof tiles with replica stone tiles. Erection of bin store. Internal alterations including: removal of partition walls and doors and insertion of new partitions and doors. Provision of an en-suite bathroom at first floor and two bathrooms in attic. Replace and lower part of ground floor and underpinning to load bearing walls. Replacement staircase. | Supported | Approved |

| Address | Outline of application | PC Decision | SNC Decision |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------------------|
| 21 Blacksmiths Hill | Alterations to the inglenook fire place in the dining room to accommodate a cast-iron stove. Installation of cast-iron stove to sitting room | Supported | Approved |
| 18 Roundtown | Remove & replace UPVC windows, reinstate existing door openings and alter window to French doors to lounge, 2 no roof lights to north-east elevation. Alterations to various internal door openings, and alterations to kitchen to create utility room & ground floor WC, installation of second floor en-suite, remove and replace staircase. | Supported | Approved |
| Wensden Field House Charlton Road | Two storey extension on south west elevation. Alter roof to form new gable end on north east elevation. New garage with ancillary rooms over. | Supported | Appeal Pending |
| 8 Roundtown | Single storey rear extension to existing garage. Re roof in slate to match existing sloped roof and addition of 1 No. roof light. Removal of existing chimney breast in the kitchen and external stack and remove existing loft area to expose the vaulted roof timbers and re point exposed high level stone with lime mortar. Replace existing roof light on the second floor to match internal opening size. Extend ground floor W.C using adjacent cupboard to create a shower room. Re instate original opening to sitting room from hall and replace the panelling in the sitting room with real wood panelling. Strip back and re plaster using lime mortars to make good previous maintenance repairs. Extend width of existing low wall and fence by 1.8m to allow for a wider and safer access to the rear driveway. | Supported | Approved |
| 24 Roundtown | Hatch in internal attic wall | Supported | Approved |
| The Grammar House Croughton Road | Alterations to interior and exterior fenestration on north and west elevations in localised areas | Supported | Approved |
| 25 Blacksmiths Hill | Single storey side extension | Supported | Approved |
| 3 Bowmens Lea | Single storey extension to rear and conversion of existing loft space to bedroom with ensuite (Retrospective) | Supported | Approved |

AYNHO WRITERS



Our three facilitators each run our meetings for four months. Fiona Gow has replaced Philip Davies as Philip can only be with us occasionally. He is now Chair of the UK Association of Christian Writers. His first novel, *Destiny's Rebel*, is due for release in September, and the sequel is about to go to the publisher. Other writers with recent publications are Imogen Mathews, with her Kindle edition of *Run Away*, about to be followed by the sequel, *The Perfume Muse*, Keith McClellan, with *The Bootlegger's Widow*, John Hermon with *Sometimes I Write Words*, while Edna Sparkes and June Smith, regularly have poems published by Forward Press. Our annual publication this year, *A Way with Words*, produced by the combined efforts of Jayne Ryman and Brian Reynolds, was felt to be one of our best and the usual six copies were donated to Katherine House Hospice.

June Smith ran a successful workshop earlier in the year and in September; we arranged a visit to Upton House to inspire our writing. We had a very enjoyable and informative session on the lives of the servants at the house in the 1930s and 1940s from volunteer, Ann Thomas. Examples of our work are available on the village website as are more details of our current members and their achievements.

We meet in the village hall from 10.00AM to 12.30PM on the second Saturday of the month.

Keith McClellan, 01869 810346

AYNHO GARDENING CLUB

In 2014, the Gardening Club continued with its programme of meetings on the second Wednesday of the month from January to November. The meetings are usually held in the Village Hall and involve a talk on some garden-related subject, or a talk with photographs on particular garden/gardens of interest. This is followed by refreshments and time for a chat. The talks last year covered a variety of topics from Garden Design to poisonous plants, current issues and a wonderful talk on roses. After our AGM a talk on beekeeping was given by a local bee-keeping farmer.

During the summer months, generally two trips are organised and last year the Club visited the Botanical Garden in Birmingham and Kew Gardens, with an evening visit to a local herb farm. The outings were well attended and, amazingly, the weather was kind on all occasions.

The Gardening Club had its usual table at Maytime-in-the-Square selling a large number of plants and some garden tools. This event is one of our main sources of income for the club and the stall did extremely well on the day.

The Flower and Vegetable show was held at the end of August and, apart from being an enjoyable village event, proved that many people in the village take a great interest in what they grow in their gardens and that there are a number who have some fine culinary skills. It is always satisfying for those who organise the show when the classes are well subscribed, as they were this year.

It is encouraging that our evening events have been well attended and that the membership of the club is slightly up on the previous year. New Members are always very welcome – members do not need any particular knowledge of gardening techniques or plant names. Information about the Gardening Club can be found in the Newsletter or on the village website or ring Annabel Bellamy (810847) or Kath Arnold (811868).

AYNHO SPORTS FIELD AND PAVILION (ASRA) AND THE PAVILION CAFE

Everything continued as usual at the pavilion and sports field whilst I had my year away from the café and fundraising. Anita kindly stepped in with the walkers refreshments and continues to provide lunches on a Thursday for anyone who wants them. The cricket and football teams have both played again and the pavilion bookings have been busy as usual. Funds are looking good and boosted by Michael Johnsons quiz night takings and The Park Club Draw. The prize money for 2015 is £80 per month and still not too late to join if you want a number for the remainder of the year.

At the meeting on 23rd March this year it was decided to reform a committee in order to put some plans in place for maintenance and continued running of the pavilion and also to maybe add some new ideas and activities. We also agreed to have a group of "friends": those people who don't want to be on a committee but are happy to come along and be involved as and when necessary.

It would be nice to create a social element to the group and to utilise the pavilion as best we can. The questionnaire that was recently sent out indicated that the majority of the responders wanted the pavilion maintained rather than improved. The new committee when formed will use these questionnaires to form the basis of our plans as best we can but the fact remains that those on the committee will have the influencing vote, especially if they are prepared to put in the work needed to bring things to fruition. So, if you want to see change, come along and get involved and don't complain if you don't like what you see. Everyone has different views of what they think should be available, we have had some successes and some failures with what we've done over the years but we need people to come forward, particularly the parents of the younger generation.

I propose our first committee meeting is an open one, inviting not only those who put their names down on the night of 23rd, but also anyone who was unable to make that meeting. If you would like to join us the date is:

FRIDAY 1ST MAY 7.30pm AT THE PAVILION

Please let me know if you are thinking of attending

Kay Anderson, 01869 810019 or kaynho@lineone.net

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, AYNHO

This APCM sees the second full year of my ministry here in the Astwick Vale Benefice.

We have continued to offer a wide variety of opportunities and styles for Worship around the Benefice churches with the Evening Taizé service proving more popular in numbers than many morning services. I think that as a benefice we are beginning to appreciate the regular coming together and the uplifting worship of fuller churches.

Bill Richards, Carrie O'Regan, William Usher and Heather Dommatt have all taken leading roles at our parish services this past year and I am very grateful to them all. I want to thank Kevin O'Regan for his help with organising the Taizé music and for all our organists around the benefice for their commitment.

It has been good to have Rev Shemil join the ministry team as a deacon this summer and we look forward to help him develop as a priest in the coming years. For me it has been a blessing to have somebody to share, reflect and pray with and his ministry has been shared around the parishes.

Our work with the church schools has continued with the foundation governors appointed by the PCC at both Charlton and Croughton schools. Both schools have also been supported with weekly assemblies by the Rector and curate and support with RE lessons. Shemil and I are both governors at Croughton School. It is pleasing to report that our new venture last year called 'Open the Book' continues to share bible stories around various mums and tots groups.

The summer saw the continuation of the well-established and popular holiday club at Croughton School. This year the theme was based around a 'Space Academy'. Around 70 children enjoyed the week which ended with a special celebration service on Sunday at Croughton Church. More helpers are always welcomed to join the team. If you cannot be there, then please pray for us who are. Sadly the link from holiday club to Sunday hasn't materialised yet for children and helpers.

The new family service format at Aynho is beginning to settle in with more work needed on the personal invitation of families to the service. The Family service at Croughton has been shelved for the moment while a better way to found to link with the school. Farthinghoe saw a new venture of a midweek Sunday school start in the autumn. But running this on my day off proved impractical and we are currently looking for a time and place when it can be properly resourced. Pizza praise has been a bit sporadic this year with other ventures on Saturday being tried to find the best time and day for families.

Our Lent bible study this year on The Lord's Prayer used some new material in a series called 'Pilgrim'. This has been very successful and we hope to have more regular groups during the rest of the year. Aynho PCC has agreed to the preparation of young people to receive communion and classes have started with five children this now applies to the whole benefice.

The churches has been served well by their church wardens and PCC who have worked to maintain the church fabric and to make the churches a welcoming place for faces old and new. They have also worked hard with Church fetes and fund raising to help raise the £75,000 or so it costs to keep the 6 buildings and churches in order. My grateful thanks go to everybody who has worked so hard. All money is raised or given by donation with no government or diocesan funding. If you would like to help maintain the church in your village, every bit of help would be appreciated, from time on clean up days, so sponsoring grass cutting, of a regular financial contribution. The church is there for the whole village, not just for Sunday worship, as national listed buildings they are everybody's heritage. I think this year we need to work on increasing the number of people on committed giving. I.e. what used to be called envelope schemes but are much simpler if done these days by Standing order through the banks. I believe PCC members should be setting the benchmarks for this in our churches. i.e. every PCC member should be committed to regular giving, to model this behaviour for the whole congregation. In some of our churches only 2 people have signed up to give regularly. Others may give regularly but are not in a recorded scheme. This coming year there is much maintenance work needed on the church fabric and we are fortunate to have received over £100,000 in grants towards the costs but about £50,000 is still needed.

Our churches are also places of prayer and regular Morning Prayer is said in your village church throughout the year. If you have any prayer requests or thanks giving's I would always be delighted to include them in our prayers, It is lovely at these short services to be encouraged by local villagers coming to join me in church-thank you.

Revd Simon Dommett
Rector of the Astwick Vale Benefice of Aynho, Croughton, Evenley, Farthinghoe, Hinton-in-the-Hedges and Steane.

AYNHO WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

We meet in the Village Hall on the 3rd Wed of every month. Our membership is 30 which we feel is very good. Our speakers are entertaining & educational talking on diverse topics & the atmosphere is sociable & friendly.

We hold monthly walks, join other local W.I. for special events & this year is the 100th Anniversary of W.I. starting in England, so we have a delegate attending the meeting at the Royal Albert Hall. There is also a Royal Buckingham Palace Garden Party & we have a member attending that event too. We have a College at Denman near Abingdon & members & visitors can attend a day course or stay-over courses, with very professional tutors.

When the Village have events such as Maytime in the Square, Church Fete or Open Gardens then our members are very generous in helping out at these events. Our President Barbara Watkins & her Committee work very hard to give the W.I. in the Village a good name & our programmes can be found on the village website.

AYNHO BIODIVERSITY GROUP

We finished compiling the survey of Aynhoe Park which took place in 2013/2014 and have had it printed with copies going to Aynhoe Park plus any other interested parties.

From the Spring of 2014 we have been surveying the playing field recording its flora and fauna and looking at ways in which we can encourage biodiversity here and enhance the habitat on the 2 mounds. Over the



Peacock Butterfly Adult and Larvae

year 29 different species of birds were recorded along with 7 different species of bumblebee, 6 of ladybirds and 9 of butterflies.

Although to some the nettles on the mounds look a mess they are an essential food source and habitat



Cross Orbweaver Spider Cocoon

for at least 40 different species of insects which in turn are food for the birds. When we were surveying we found they were covered with peacock and tortoiseshell butterfly larvae. We left them untouched except for strimming the mound by the gate in the Autumn ready for the new growth in this Spring.

On the mound by the tennis court, we planted wild flower seeds as well as other bee and butterfly friendly plants from our gardens. Then in the Autumn 200 English bluebells were planted under the trees by the main gate to provide food for the early bees and hover flies.

We erected 2 bat boxes on the playing field and 2 in the small children's playground. A bat detector was purchased so we can check on our bat population and hopefully run a bat evening in the summer.

In conjunction with the Gardening Club we again ran a biodiversity competition at their Fruit and Vegetable Show, have carried on producing a biodiversity piece for the village newsletter and provided a face painting activity at the opening of the new playground.

This coming year we intend to carry on surveying the playing field to assess the impact of what we have done so far.



Bat Boxes

AYNHO HEALTH WALKS



There are three types of health walk on Thursday mornings. The Long Walk covers between five and seven miles, takes about two hours and attracts walkers from a wide area as well as from Aynho. Current walk leaders for these walks are Keith McClellan and Ian Wilson and we expect that Renate Maddox-Born and David Reast will be qualified by the end of March. We are also grateful to Graham Archdale, Ray Abbott, and Tony Smith for helping back up. There is no charge for the walks.

The short walks are the most popular. These cover about three miles and take about an hour. There are also weekly track walks for those who for health reasons need to be able to rest

frequently and to be able to stop without being far from home. All three walks have qualified walk leaders and back up leaders and all routes are risk assessed. Leaders here are Kathy White, Nigel Porter, and Sue and Derek Hales. Walkers can choose whichever walk they wish to take and may change from week to week depending on how they are placed at the time.

We all look forward to arriving back at the pavilion for a cup of tea or coffee, a delicious cake and a good chat. Many of us also have lunch here, ordering our jacket potato before setting off and enjoying it greatly after our exercise. Anita continues to provide all this and create a cheerful, welcoming atmosphere when we get back from our walks.

We celebrated our third anniversary in January with a lunch for 47 walkers at the Rose and Crown. Our thanks go to Sue Hales for arranging that. More details are available on the village website under health walks. There are also regular descriptions of the most recent walks

Keith McClellan 01869 810346

AYNHO RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY

We have had another highly successful season, with some excellent presentations done by members of the group. The musical selections have been very varied with both classical and modern styles of music. We continue to have high attendances, however we can cater for new members who will be very welcome to come along and see how we operate. To this end we have sent an invitation to Croughton which will be displayed in their village magazine inviting them to sample what we have to offer. The meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month in the Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm.

Bob Mann, 01869 810264

AYNHO SHORT MAT BOWLS

We play bowls on two mats every Tuesday afternoon from 2.30 to 4.30 pm in the village hall. We are pleased to welcome new member Carol McClellan this year and will do the same for anyone else interested in joining us. We have all the necessary equipment to lend and our annual membership fee is just £10. There is a charge of £1 for each attendance to cover the cost of hall hire. We break for tea or coffee and no previous experience is required!

CANASTA CLUB

The Canasta Club meets at the Pavilion on Monday afternoons at 2.00pm. It is aimed at those who have already played and those that wish to learn.

One to one tuition is available for starters, and tactical advice is offered to those wishing to improve their game. Singles and Doubles are played and Tea and Biscuits are provided.

The Club can currently accommodate more players and those interested should either contact the following or turn up at the Pavilion for further information.

Derek Hales (derek.hales41@gmail.com) or Sue Hales (sheledams@aol.com)

AYNHO HISTORY SOCIETY

I am delighted to report a varied programme of lectures delivered to the highest standard. Our attempt to encourage members of the village to present their passion for history has continued with Chris Hodges explaining the evolution of European politics over the last 200 years and the impact on the UK.

Subjects covered included:

Child labour in nineteenth-century Oxfordshire

The EU Past, Present & Future

Royal Mistresses

Lilli of Aynhoe

Was Britain ready for The Great War? Northamptonshire's preparations in 1913

Ditchley Park

20 things you didn't know about Aynho

William Gill - Victorian explorer and spy

Putting Aynho on the map

Votes for Women

The Society was delighted to assist the Savings family to be reunited with the WW1 medals of Edward Savings, late of this Parish. Several Members have also agreed to become trustees of the Cartwright Archive.

The Society continues to provide genealogical information to enquirers from around the world and guided tours to visitors from near and far. Précises of our lectures are posted on line as have a number of old photographs of the village. Thank you to Jillian Wightman for ensuring a smooth transfer of information to the new web site

A special thank you to Peter Cole for his unstinting assistance as Secretary and to all those who have supported the Society be that at our meetings or at village events

We always welcome information with a village connection; please don't think we know it all!

Rupert Clark, Chairman 2015

Adderbury, Deddington & District PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The Society seeks to provide a forum for like-minded photographers to meet in a non-competitive environment, regardless of technical ability, where experience and knowledge may be shared and developed through the activities of the Society. It meets regularly on the first and third Wednesday of each month in the Apricot Room of the Cartwright Hotel. The Society's main activities include monthly presentations by outside speakers and its own members, regular workshops on digital camera controls and creativity in taking photographs, indoor studio and other workshops, occasional photo-shoots in the spring/summer, two annual exhibitions of members' work and two social events each year which have proved popular with members. In addition, the Society maintains its own web site (www.addphoto.co.uk) that provides details on all its present and future activities. The Society welcomes all members, whose digital photographic skills and experience may vary from compact cameras through to SLR cameras. Since its inception in July 2006, membership of the Society has grown steadily and includes people living in a wide catchment area of the towns and villages around Aynho.

AYNHO VILLAGE HALL

Repairs and improvements during the past twelve months have included the re-laying of the front paving stones by Malcolm Skuce, the re-decoration of the inside of the hall by Martin Hirons and plumbing works to save water by Bob McGarry. We are pleased to be able to offer a site for the proposed defibrillator and we are especially thankful to Amanda Limb and her Lunch Club helpers for raising most of the money required for its purchase. After a long period of faulty computer connections for the Tuesday Post Office the technical problems have now been solved. Sybil Stevens paid for tuning the Hall piano when she had her own instrument attended to and we are most grateful for that service.

Members of the Committee have worked hard throughout the year to maintain the bookings, financial arrangements and maintenance of the Hall. We are delighted that Val Sutton has recovered well from her medical scare and continues to keep the Hall looking clean and tidy. I am very thankful for all this work and the helpful attendance at our monthly meetings.

Douglas Ward

SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Elections for South Northants Council will be held on 7th May, the same day as the General Election. With our television screens filled with the speeches and commentary on our National leaders it is a challenge to bring voters attention to local politics. Local government is though facing many challenges , not least the reduction of Government Subsidies to local government and the need to maintain services. I am pleased to report that for the year 2015/16 South Northants Council has been able to present a balanced budget at no extra cost to Council Tax payers.

With the dramatic reduction in the price of oil has come an unexpected challenge to the Council's recycling programme. This is because the reduction in oil has meant that there has been a steep drop in the price of recycled plastics, and also in recycled paper. The Council is facing the prospect of receiving very much less from these products and that is a real challenge to what has up to now been a very successful and popular programme.

With the Governments drive for increasing the number of new homes there is going to be continuing pressure on our district to deliver more housing. There has been a challenge from Cherwell District Council in its proposed Local Plan to build factories to the east of the M40 which South Northants Council has vigorously opposed. We are awaiting the result of the Inspector's report which is due in the next few weeks. Although South Northant's Strategic Plan has been approved by a Government inspector and we have a deliverable 5 year land supply for housing which means the Council is in a much better position to resist unwanted applications from developers, this remains a popular area for development not least across our borders in Oxfordshire. More house means more traffic and this is something that I realise gives justifiable concern to our residents.

Finally South Northants is moving this month from its offices in Springfield, Towcester to the Forum , off Northampton Road. This move will come at no cost to the residents of South Northamptonshire and indeed there will be a substantial saving in running costs as the new building is smaller in size and very much more efficient in energy consumption. The building will also house the Registrar and the Towcester Library.

Cllr John Townsend
Rainsborough Ward

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

This report covers three main items: first the County Council Budget for the current financial year, secondly the Council Plan for the next five years, and thirdly concerns about the large number of houses being built in north Oxfordshire and the effect that this will have on this village.

You will have received details of your council tax for the financial year 2015/16 and be aware that the County Council element has risen by 1.95%, increasing the tax for a Band 'D' property by just under £21. Northamptonshire still has the lowest county council tax in the country. The total net revenue spend this year is £415m with £238m coming from the tax you pay. As usual, the biggest single expenditure is on Adult Social Care at £140m, followed by Children, Families, and Education at £123m. The other large cost is Environment, Development, and Transport at £63m.

Far more important than the Budget is the Council Plan for the next five years. The present method of providing services is no longer sustainable; we cannot keep on reducing costs by improving efficiency in the way we have done over the last few years. Costs of the base budget have already been reduced by £200m and we still have to reduce by a further £148m over the next five years. A continuation of the present method of providing services would just drastically reduce the quality to an unacceptable level. The simple fact is that the traditional model of local government is no longer sustainable. The method of largely paying for public services through government grants no longer works and a new way has to be found, which has resulted in this year's Council Plan being dramatically different to anything done before. It plans the biggest transformation of public services in the county since the creation of the council 125 years ago. The plan is for the County Council to become a much smaller organization which will commission other agencies to carry out activities to enable the achievement of its goals for the residents. A move has actually already be made some way along this route; for example, the Children Centres are no

longer directly controlled by the council but by lead service providers commissioned to cover ten geographical areas. The charity, Action for Children, controls six areas, Spurgeons, three areas, and Pen Green Children Centre covers Corby area. Other examples are: Olympus Care Services, a council owned company which provides support for elderly adults, people with physical or learning disabilities, and people with dementia. There is also KIERWSP who have the £200m four year Highways Services Contract which expires in 2020.

The County Council will dramatically reduce the number of employees down to about 250, commissioning services from a federation of organizations including private businesses, social enterprises, council owned companies, and charities. The intention will be to transfer as many existing staff as is possible to the new providers. These dramatic changes will be implemented gradually over the next five years. I really do hope it works! It is of course not the only way of reducing costs; an alternative would be to follow the same path as the one being considered by Oxfordshire to form a Unitary Council, removing one tier of local government. This is the route favoured by some opposition members on the council.

In my report to you last year I expressed my concern about the number of houses being built in Oxfordshire which will result in a traffic increase in our villages, and particularly in Aynho and Croughton. I have initiated talks between the two County Councils as I am very concerned about the adequacy of planned increased road infrastructure to support the larger traffic volume even in north Oxfordshire, and there is of course nothing at all planned for the roads in our county. It is worrying that at a recent meeting in Bodicote House the Government Inspector is reported to have said 'subject to a significant modal shift everything will be fine'. In effect he means that if everybody used buses or bikes there would not be a traffic problem! The next meeting of the two authorities is scheduled for the 15th May and I shall be attending to press home my concerns. The impact on our villages will be made worse by construction traffic for HS2, if it goes ahead, and even by the additional traffic created by the increase in the number of personnel at RAF Croughton.

The other issue relating to roads raised by several residents is about the excessive speed of cars on all our minor roads. Many motorists seem to think that the lack of a lower speed limit makes it safe to travel at 60mph and even greater speeds. Although the measures taken to slow the traffic down in Aynho a few years ago have been partially effective, I consider that vehicle activated signs are needed to slow the traffic down on the long straight stretch from Portway to the Village Hall.

The only other item I should mention is the Empowering Councillors' Scheme. As advised at previous meetings. Each County Councillor receives £7,000 to spend on locally based projects and my allocation last year was used as follows: £1,833 to Aynho towards the cost of the refurbishment of the Children Playground; £1,344 to Evenley to refurbish the War Memorial; £960 to Charlton for the replacement of a streetlight; £800 to Kings Sutton for a new Bowling Mat and £400 for a computer for public use in the Memorial Hall. I had reserved the balance of £1,900 to refurbish the Children Playground at Farthinghoe but, as this project was delayed, it now has to be funded from the current year's allowance. The annual amount allowed doesn't go far when spread over fourteen parishes!

Ron Sawbridge
County Councillor for Middleton Cheney Division

Email Addresses!

The Parish Council will be sending more information out by email – do we have yours? We currently have about 45% of households email addresses. If not please do let Sadie have one by emailing her at Sadie.Patamia@aynho.org - it will not be passed onto 3rd parties.



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