

# FARTHINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

held on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at 7.30pm  
in Farthinghoe Village Hall



Councillors present: Mr Mick Morris (Chair) (MM)  
Mr John Grant (JG)  
Mr David Dashwood (Vice Chair) (DD)  
Mr Henry Bankes-Jones (HBJ)  
Mr Trevor Jarvis (TJ)  
Mr Barry Willett  
District Cllr Rebecca Breese (RB)  
Mrs Mary Amos (Clerk)

Also attending Graham Thorley  
Rosemary Jarvis

18 attendees from the public

Apologies: Cllr James Harrison (JH)  
Safety Community Team  
Wendy Whitehouse  
Ruth Brittan  
Jenny Forbes  
David Hancock

ITEM	
1.	<p>Chairman's Welcome</p> <p>A warm welcome was extended to all speakers, representatives of village organisations and villagers by Cllr Morris. In particular, Cllr Morris welcomed Cllr Rebecca Breese.</p> <p>Cllr Morris read through the Chairman's Welcome (Appendix 1).</p>
2.	<p>To receive apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllr James Harrison, Wendy Whitehouse, Head Teacher Farthinghoe Village School, the Safety Community Team, Ruth Brittain, Ruth Dashwood, Jenny Forbes, and David Hancock.</p>
3.	<p>To receive and approve for signature the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 April 2018</p> <p>The minutes were proposed by Rebecca Breese and seconded by David Muller and were signed by the Chairman as a true record.</p>
4.	<p>To review matters arising from the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 April 2018</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>
5.	<p>To receive the Chairman's Report for the year 2018-19</p> <p>Cllr Morris explained that questions would be invited after each section of his report and proceeded to read through the Chairman's Report (Appendix 2).</p> <p>In response to a query on which three safety issues had been highlighted in the Chairman's</p>

	<p>report, the Chairman reported that the safety issues identified were;</p> <p>Queen Street being used as a rat run during peak traffic times</p> <p>School Crossing – jumping of lights on the pedestrian crossing, in particular on the way into Banbury</p> <p>It was mentioned that the pedestrian lights had been hit by a vehicle and was tilted slightly, and as the Give Way sign on the Cockley Road had been hit and was facing the wrong way, it could not be seen on the approach.</p> <p>A question was raised for Cllr Breese on how often road signage required inspection. Cllr Breese said she would find out and report back.</p> <p>5.1 Village Hall</p> <p>There were no comments; the full report is shown in Appendix 3</p> <p>5.2 Primary School</p> <p>Cllr Grant asked Graham Thorley about becoming a member of the Warriner Multi Academy trust, and what its impact had been?</p> <p>He responded that it had been done to protect the future of the school, they had considered the Academy model and decided that it was not right for the school as they wanted to maintain the school's independence, and it was felt that the Warriner Multi Academy Trust was the best model for Farthinghoe School.</p> <p>He highlighted that the school now had 45 pupils and all the staff were at the top of their game and asked for everyone to get involved with the school, whether it was to listen to reading, or give talks.</p> <p>The full report is shown in Appendix 4.</p> <p>5.3 Parish Clerk Financial Report</p> <p>In response to question about available funding/grants, the Chair explained that there was no funding left from the New Homes Bonus grants received in 2018/19 that funded the Village Hall insulation, and Farthinghoe's street lighting project, and that 2019/20 will see the closing of this particular source of funding.</p> <p>Cllr Breese commented that some villages had been receiving grants from HS2 funds, the Chair advised that he had been told that Farthinghoe didn't qualify for the HS2 Safety Fund. Cllr Breese said that there was another fund managed by Groundworks and that grants are available for up to £75k, and that she would forward details after the meeting.</p> <p>5.4 &amp; 5.5 SNC &amp; NCC Reports</p> <p>Cllr Breese gave an overview of both of the reports and to clarify some of the points in the report, and expanded on some of the work done so far, and stressed that there was still lots of work to be done, and that there was no confirmation that the Unitary Council will happen next year, and there is also a belief that it may be delayed for another year.</p> <p>It was confirmed that Highways would be split and that the Kierwsp contract ends next year.</p> <p>A question was raised to query whether there was any truth in the belief that there is a deliberate underspend on roads, so that by the time they are handed over to the Unitary Councils that there will be problems and they will be someone else's problem. Cllr Breese stated that there was no truth in this at all. To date all of the focus has been on child safety and not highways.</p> <p>The full reports are available in Appendix 6 and 7</p>
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	<p>5.6 Church Report</p> <p>There were no comments, the full report is available in Appendix 8.</p> <p>5.6.1 The Seven Sisters Tree Site</p> <p>The Chairman stated that although this report was indexed to the Church report, in fact they were not related at all.</p> <p>A question was raised as to when the buried capsule would be dug up. Rosemary Jarvis said it had been buried in 2000, and it was envisaged it would be dug up around 2050.</p> <p>The full report is available in Appendix 9.</p> <p>5.7 Almshouse</p> <p>There were no comments, the full report is available in Appendix 10.</p> <p>5.8 Allotments</p> <p>There were no comments, the full report is available in Appendix 11.</p> <p>5.9 Northamptonshire Police Brackley Neighbourhood Team</p> <p>A suggestion was made that we asked the Police about the 10.9% increase in funding and what they feel the benefit will be to the Villages, and ask Stephen Mold what Farthinghoe residents will get for their £225 average per household (based on 170 houses) in the forthcoming year?</p> <p>A question was raised about the recent mention of Safety Cameras in the Village. Cllr Grant advised that this was a SNC initiative that had been offered, but when he expressed interest on behalf of Farthinghoe, found that the initiative had been shelved for the present time whilst further investigation took place, and there was no indication when it would be re-offered.</p> <p>The full report is available in Appendix 12.</p> <p>5.10 Playpark</p> <p>There were no complaints and no comments.</p> <p>Closing Address</p> <p>The full list of appendices is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 - Chairman's Welcome</li> <li>2 - Chairman's Report</li> <li>3 - Village Hall Committee</li> <li>4 - Primary School</li> <li>5 - Parish Council Finances</li> <li>6 - South Northamptonshire District Council</li> <li>7 - Northamptonshire County Council</li> <li>8 - Church of St Michael and All Angels Farthinghoe</li> <li>9 – The Seven Sisters Tree Site</li> <li>10 - Almshouse</li> <li>11 - Allotments</li> <li>12 - Northamptonshire Police Brackley Neighbourhood team</li> </ul>
6.	<p>General Question and Answer session</p> <p>It was stated that dog fouling in the Village is a problem, and several solutions were discussed.</p>

	<p>The Chairman stated that there is a new initiative called Parishes Together, that has been created so that villages could get together and discuss issues and find out how other villages may have resolved similar issues, and he suggested that he raised the issue of Dog Fouling at their next meeting.</p> <p>It was highlighted that a property at the corner of Queen street had foliage protruding over the pavement which was causing a safety issue in terms of driving visibility and the ability to use the pavement. The Chairman confirmed that he would look at the issue.</p>
9	<p>Any other business</p> <p>There was no other business and no further questions from the public.</p>

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at **8.33pm**.

## APPENDIX 1 – CHAIRMAN’S WELCOME

Welcome everyone and thank you all for coming to the 2018 Farthinghoe Annual Parish Meeting.

In particular, we welcome Councillor Rebecca Breese in her joint role as our Northamptonshire County Councillor and as our South Northamptonshire District Councillor.

This year we have decided to try something new and to adjust the format of this meeting.

Firstly, we have selected a date which does not coincide School Easter Holidays and thus will hopefully give more people the opportunity to attend.

Secondly, we would like to move away from the traditional report reading format (reports have been made available on the Parish Council website prior to the meeting and are still available in written form if required), so that we can quickly move on to a more interactive scenario.

Thirdly, we would like to begin including a topic of local interest and this year Steve Sneath has kindly offered to give us a talk and more detail on his interesting village related photography project. We are so grateful for this and feel that it will be of great interest to all.

These changes will give everyone the chance to ask questions in a less formal environment and of equal importance we would like to hear your ideas of how things can be improved further.

In his report last year, the previous chairman, Ross van Geest, made mention of his goals. The fact that these goals were achieved makes me feel privileged to follow on with such a firm base to work from.

My goals are a natural extension of those same goals, majoring on increased road safety in the village, be it short term or long term.

The immediate route forward is tinged with confusion following the much-publicised financial difficulties at Northants County Council and the Government Inspector’s media statements that he would recommend that both our County Council and District Council be replaced.

As a Parish Council, we have received no guidance direct from the horse’s mouth but are reliant upon what we read in the press or hear on the television.

Once we officially learn more about the future then we can begin to formulate a detailed strategy to achieve our needs and for this we will need everyone’s support and interaction which will be welcomed and valued.

Mick Morris, Chairman

To avoid having a continuous one-way monologue of 20 minutes or more, I have decided to divide this report into distinct sections, which are enumerated 1-9.

At the end of each section, I will stop and open the meeting to a question and answer session, solely concerned with this particular section.

Questions should first be addressed to the Chair, but it may well be decided that someone else is better qualified to give a detailed response on any particular question.

Once the chairman’s report is finalised then the meeting will again be open to a question and answer session in which we can revisit the previous subjects and have questions and suggestions introduced for new topics.

### **SECTION ONE - TRAFFIC**

The main topic again this year for the Parish Council is the funding and construction of a village bypass.

In this respect it has been a year of highs and lows which reached its nadir in February 2018 with the announcement that Northants County Council (NCC) had filed a Section 114 notice, which in practice is a protection against bankruptcy.

As our bypass project seemed to depend solely on the efforts of NCC to design, prepare the project and then to put our case for funding, it leaves us in a state of limbo in the short term.

Despite Government Inspectors taking the reins, we are currently still in limbo, having had no procedural advice from anyone in authority.

Thankfully there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Fortunately, we have John Grant, not easily diverted from his chosen course, who had prepared some very factual and meaningful letters to the Rt. Hon. Andrea Leadsom, our MP and Leader of the House of Commons and to the Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling MP, Secretary of State for Transport. These letters along with the outcome of the ensuing correspondence has paved the way for a new enthusiasm.

In the April edition of the Farthinghoe Chronicle we had prepared a precis entitled Bypass Update.

In this precis there is mention of a detailed letter of support which Andrea Leadsom had sent in support of Farthinghoe benefitting from the new Major Roads Network (MRN) funding which begins in 2021.

As mentioned in the Farthinghoe Chronicle this letter can be made available in digital format or hard copy to anyone who wants a copy.

In addition to the support letter, Andrea had also been made us aware of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) and the role it could play in obtaining a bypass and particularly in preparing a case to the Department of Transport for funding.

This letter has identified two clear targets on which we should focus and these are:

- 1 To convince the Department of Transport to reduce the minimum qualifying project qualifying value from £20 million to £10 million
- 2 To allow the allocated bypass funding to include the total cost of design and preparation as well as construction which would mean that we would be no longer solely dependent upon Northants County Council to fund this element.

We are also mindful of the fact that the construction of the bypass as designed, whilst solving the problems for Farthinghoe village, does not take care of the safety of the A422 from Farthinghoe to Thenford crossroads, in particular the area close to the Recycling Centre.

Clause 3.2 of Andrea Leadsom’s letter is meaningful in this respect and I quote verbatim:

“However, if upgrade and investment works are undertaken on a particular road or stretch of road, I would ask if it worth considering projected traffic growth. Whilst I note that the proposals specifically reject attempts to “futureproof” the network, it would seem opportune to ensure capacity is expanded to prevent communities being further disturbed by works at a later date.”

Following on from the information above we must also understand that even if we are successful in our quest for a bypass, there will still be a number of years before it is in place.

In the meantime, the traffic volumes are growing at an alarming rate, particularly HGVs, and this increase will accentuate the dangers which we already have to face in the village. We need to find ways negate or minimise these and have already working on this and will continue to do so.

These include:

- The dangers at the School crossing lights.
- The vulnerability of children having to move in groups from the school to the village hall along the ill equipped Cockley Road.
- The morning and evening “rat run” and speeding traffic which is Queen Street.
- Streetlights improvements
- Air pollution (checks now being monitored)
- More care with parking not to obstruct footpaths and cause danger at road junctions.
- Hedges and trees overhanging footpaths and roads need to be regularly tended. Whilst broaching this topic, it is so good to see the allotment hedge adjacent to the speed camera looking so trim. Thanks to Ruth Dashwood and to Arthur Waters for this pleasing situation.
- To continue our fight against the introduction of a Motorway Service Area complex at J11 of the M40. Such a complex would inevitably have a detrimental effect on the traffic problem through Farthinghoe.

At this juncture I would like to invite John Grant to expound on some the Queen Street topic about which I know that he feels very passionate.

Mick Morris  
Chairman

**Summary:**

1. The new Committee has been making really good progress over the last two years to both clarify and document its role and the way it works. The management process is now very transparent with access to most of the documentation being made available either via a website or by specific request.
2. All areas of the Hall management and environment have improved at a good pace considering the voluntary nature of all those involved. The new Storage area and Bar have been particularly well received and the coordinated colour scheme with matching curtains is now receiving compliments.
3. There is a really good level of enthusiasm and communication within the Team. Each Member has a specific role in managing the hall and has helped deliver the many improvements this year:
  - a. Income up by over 50% in last two years
  - b. Bank balance up from £4788 at 06/2016 to £ 9188@3/2018
  - c.150 Club income up by £1168 on 2016 figure
  - d. New, regularised hire conditions and prices in place for all regular hirers.
  - e. 50% reduction in charges for Villagers using the Hall.
  - f. Clear and documented goals and management processes.
  - g. Improved physical environment with new storage area, bar and furnishings.
  - h. Significantly improved financial control and reporting with web access to bookings etc.
  - i. There has also been a major move to identify and communicate with all stakeholders (those who use the Hall) and our Suppliers, resulting in higher income and lower costs.
4. One really pleasing note is the increased involvement of Villagers in contributing to both Events and improvements at the Hall. After many years of complaints that Village Hall events are poorly supported, I can say that there is a real sense of Community developing around the Hall, which justifies our goals. There is also a core of Supporters who regularly help at the Hall which considerably lightens the load on the Committee - thank you all.

**Goals for 2018:**

There is a set of Goals in place for 2018 which provides a clear focus for the current Committee.

1. Physical upgrade: To continue enhancement of the Village Hall facility for the benefit of the local community by:
  - a. Building a better storage facility to smarten the inside and provide a practical enhancement to the storage of all Village Hall items.
  - b. Focussing on the Village Hall grounds to ensure they are better maintained and more attractive to all visitors.
  - c.Replacing the original Bar and constructing a replacement which will service both inside and outside.
  - d. Creating a viable plan, including funding, which will upgrade the heating system and provide hot water to all areas as appropriate.
2. Procedural enhancements: To put in place a management system which will be both transparent and documented, allowing consistency for following FVH Committees. This will be achieved by:
  - a. Building on the 1961 document setting out the purpose and operations of the Village Hall Committee, updating to 21st Century relevance and putting it into law.



- b. Managing in a transparent and open environment with all transactions, minutes, plans etc. easily accessible by all interested Villagers.
  - c. Reviewing all agreements and contracts with our Suppliers and Customers.
3. Increasing income: To put in place a marketing strategy allowing maximum use of our facilities for hire, but in the context that the Hall is for the benefit of all Villagers. This will be achieved by:
- a. Publishing a marketing plan, based on research and discussion with all stakeholders. This will be reviewed at least twice a year by the Committee
  - b. Creating a specific website for the Hall which will be managed by the Committee and not outsourced.
  - c. Creating and managing events specifically for the Village, encouraging both its involvement and use.
4. Building relationships with Stakeholders: To recognise the Stakeholders in the Village Hall environment and be pro-active in engaging with them by:
- a. Regularly reminding ourselves who they are.
  - b. Assigning individual FVHC members to each one and encouraging the sharing of their interactions.
  - c. Creating special relationships with Parish Council and Village School
  - d. Reviewing the Stakeholder list annually as part of 2. above

**Current Priorities:**

- A. Structural/Environmental: To ensure the structure of the Hall has a significant focus by providing background heating, increasing insulation and making the building more airtight. As a result of the current storage upgrade, the outside environment needs a focus to ensure the BBQ is built and the area around the Container and sheds is clearly defined with a concrete border and is made safe.
- B. Website: To create, implement and manage a specific website for the Hall. This will be used to provide access to all processes and documentation leading to the 'open' environment as stated in our goals. It will also allow the Marketing of our facility with its enhanced services to allow us to grow the revenue from the Hall hire. It will also be a window into the Village which should be using our services.
- C. Facilities: To increase the facilities available in the Hall as a way of increasing our revenue and providing access to a greater potential Hire base. Already the implementation of an audio-visual upgrade has resulted in the formation of the Farthinghoe Film Club. Increased facilities such as WiFi could result in more use of the Committee room by Businesses for example.
- D. Management: By the next AGM, all processes will be documented and it will be very easy to handover to a new Committee if necessary. It will minimise the 'discovery' element of how the management of the Hall works and all users, suppliers, processes and critical actions will be available from one document.

**Beyond 2018:**

- A. Outside area: There is currently a Committee member responsible for the external environment. Flowers and shrubs are now managed, with much of the carpark reclaimed from the creeping grass area. Future plans include a relaxing Patio area at the rear with maximum use of the space available around the Hall

- B. Facilities: A focus on the decoration capability of the interior will see the ability to change colour and shape with the use of drapes etc. The lighting will be upgraded along with the heating to provide more remote management of the Hall facilities. The Committee room will be a separate hire option and we will consider additional outside access to it.
- C. Income generation: The intention is to increase the income potential as a basis for the above investment in environment and facilities. The current ethos is to ensure the Hall is a Village owned facility for use by the Village and we do not intend to run the Hall as an income generating Business.
- D. Village involvement: As the main goal of the Committee is to run the Hall for the benefit of the Village, it is important to understand the requirements of the Village. This has been challenging to date as these ideas are difficult to access, However, there has been a good response to those events put on just for Village enjoyment. We need to get a wider input into the running of the Hall and this will remain a focus for next year.
- E. Marketing presence: The Committee is pretty clear about where our facility fits and compares with other Halls in the area. We understand our strengths and weaknesses in comparison and firmly believe that a greater Web presence will help sell our facilities as well as making it less onerous to manage the Hall (important for volunteers). It is planned to work more closely with other providers such as local caterers etc. to access different markets.

**Conclusion:**

The Hall is in a good position as a Village asset and has improved in all respects over the past couple of years. The current Committee is very clear about its objectives and motivated to deliver significant improvements with great enthusiasm and commitment.

The heating project and website will make a major addition to the platform which we can offer our services from. There is a good relationship with all users and suppliers, making it easier to continue the improvement programme. The Parish Council are now active partners in moving things on and we are convinced the improvements to the facilities will improve over the coming year.

The Committee welcomes any input or comments from the Village and can be contacted via the contacts page on the website or by attendance at the monthly meetings at 19.30 on the last Wednesday of the month.

**Committee Members and responsibilities:**

David Hancock, Chair - Maintenance, Security, Storage areas, Marquee, Legalities

Philippa Clayton, Clerk - Agenda, Minutes, Processes, Events, Website, Marketing Comms

Jenny Phipps - Outside area & Gardens

Lisa Wenmouth - Finances, Website, Marketing Comms

Jenny Johnston - Finances, School liaison

Beste Bragg - Events, Marketing Comms

Wendy Hancock - Bookings, Cleaning, 150 Club, Events

Dave Hancock, Chairman

This report provides villagers with an update on the work the school has been carrying out in order to maintain our 'Outstanding status'. To drive further school improvements, a key piece of work at the start of the year has been for us to define our school values.

*Farthinghoe.....where all children are valued and given the opportunity to thrive!*

*We are....*

*A Community*

*Unique*

*Caring*

*Resilient and able to grasp every opportunity to learn.*

There have been two changes in staffing this year, the appointment of a new Deputy Head Teacher, Sharon Turner and Wendy Bowen, a teaching assistant working principally with children in Year 3 and 4. These members of staff have been welcomed into our staff team and are having a positive impact on the workings of the school.

Governors are now actively pursuing conversion of the school to Academy status. This is the most important area of school development. We have an exciting opportunity to become part of one of the highest regarded Multi Academy Trusts (MAT) in the area. We believe this would be a positive move for our school; providing security, opportunity and sustainability for the future education of our pupils.

Since we previously considered academy status in 2013 (but didn't convert) the context around us has changed. More schools locally have converted – half of state primary schools in Northamptonshire are now academies, and the same is true of primary schools within a 5 mile radius of our school. Reductions in funding for local authorities mean that central support services which we might previously have called on are now no longer available, or come at a cost. Upcoming funding changes being implemented by the Government will also impact on our income. The Governing Body of Farthinghoe Primary School therefore unanimously believes that the time is right to make a change. A lot of work has been done in looking at all the options available to us and this is, without doubt, the best one for our school. We have therefore resolved that we should pursue Academy status, as a member of The Warriner Multi Academy Trust.

Each school within The Warriner Multi Academy Trust retains its unique character whilst still having the opportunity to make a distinctive contribution to the MAT. Conversion to Academy status will be seamless from a pupil and parent perspective, with the day to day running of the school remaining unchanged. We will not change our ethos, our school uniform or our admissions criteria. All children attending the school and all staff employed here at the time of conversion will continue in the school. We will continue to have our own local governing body, including elected parents and staff, with the strong support and guidance of the Directors of the MAT.

**All our classes have been fascinated by our topics this year-**

- Our Village Our World
- The Second World War
- Ernest Shackleton
- Frozen Lands

To further support the progress children have made in reading, we have purchased a new set of fiction books. We have been able to do this because of donations from our generous 'School Ties' group. Currently the children are taking part in a reading challenge that not only involves extreme reading but also visiting the library.

The children are very excited about our 'new look playground': it has already been used in Maths and PE and is a great addition to the school. Sport has been key this year with a visit to the 'Snozone' to start 2018. The children were supported by an external tennis coach in the Autumn term. A gymnastic coach has been working with KS1 and KS2 and both classes have built on the skills they developed last year when the WADE coach came into school. Mr Elson, Mr Hancock and Mr Johnston helped put in a new container (PE store) at the village hall. A big thank you must go to this group as it has taken a long time to plan and action.

We now have our own blog on the school website. This has enabled the children in year 5 and 6 to record key events from the school week. Please do look at the activities that take place at the school. Road safety continues to be of high importance and in the Autumn term Mick Morris (Parish Councillor) came into school to talk to the children and they were able to share their work from road safety week. On behalf of the school I would like to thank the Parish council for their work on promoting safe driving in the village.

We are so fortunate to live in such a beautiful rural community and to have the opportunity of visiting a farm. All classes visit Greatworth farm three times a year and are able to see at first hand the changes in the seasons and how this impacts the land and livestock. We even have our own school sheep.

In the Summer term we would like to focus on Science and Maths. We will be creating opportunities for the children to use Maths outside in our outdoor classroom and the children across the school will be taking part in the **Crest Awards Scheme**- the British Science Association's flagship programme. The scheme provides Science enrichment activities to inspire and engage 5-11 year olds.

Farthinghoe Primary School is lucky to be part of such a supportive village community. We remain a very popular school and currently have 45 children at the school. Our unique character and our small class sizes enable us to offer a high adult to child ratio delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.

Thank you for your continued support.

Wendy Whitehouse  
Head teacher

In the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, the Parish Council continued to provide for precept funds and playpark funds separately within the accounting process to ensure that the funds raised so diligently by parishioners can be clearly accounted for. In addition, funds for the defibrillator were also accounted for separately. The Financial Report therefore reflects this accounting process.

### Precept funds

Opening balance at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017: £5,926.14

The precept for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 was maintained at the previous year's level of £7,150.

Income received in the year:		Expenditure in the year (incl. VAT):	
VAT refunds	£306.16	Street lighting	£1,460.75
Interest	£0.14	Grass cutting	£815.00
The Fox (Chronicle advertising)	£120.00	Subscriptions	£36.00
Limes Farm (Chronicle – 2 years)	£240.00	Donation to defibrillator fund	£480.00
Transparency fund	£240.00	Administrational costs	£1,940.30
Cancelled cheque (Land Registry)	£30.00	Clerk's costs	£1,700.00
		General maintenance	£187.20
		Speed testing Queens Street	£234.00
Total income	£936.30	Total expenditure	(£6,853.25)

Opening Balance	£5,926.14
Precept	£7,150.00
Income received	£936.30
Expenditure	(£6,853.25)
Closing Balance at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018:	<b>£7,159.19</b>

Item	2016 costs (excl. VAT)	2017 costs (excl. VAT)	% increase (where applicable)
Street lighting			
- Electricity	£855.24	£980.90	14.7%
- Maintenance	£382.47	£359.00	
Administration			
- Insurance	£720.70	£749.64	4%
- Internal audit fee	£162.00	£167.00	3.1%
- External audit fee	£200.00	£0.00	
- NCALC subscription	£245.74	£256.04	4.2%
- Chronicle printing	£795.60	£715.60	
- Election fee	£0.00	£0.00	
- Clerk's salary	£1,400.00	£1,400.00	
- Clerk's expenses	£300.00	£300.00	
- Clerk training	£0.00	£0.00	
- Website domain name renewal	£41.65	£43.35	4.1%
- Website hosting and support service	£61.88	£0.00	
- IT equipment	£613.69	£0.00	
- Land registry	£30.00	£0.00	
Mowing	£840.00	£815.00	
General maintenance			
- Dog waste disposal	£156.00	£156.00	
- Refurbishment of noticeboard	£0.00	£0.00	
- Playpark safety inspection	£0.00	£0.00	

Council for Protection of Rural England subs	£36.00	£36.00	
Donation to defibrillator fund	£0.00	£480.00	
Speed check on Queens Street	£0.00	£195.00	
		£6653.53	

#### Explanation of increases

The 14.7% increase in electricity costs are due to the unit costs charged by E.ON increasing from 14.4p per kWh to 15.75p per kWh which applied from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017. The replacement of the street lighting is very much on the agenda for the next financial year, dependent on receipt of funding through the Councillors Empowerment Fund, which will result in a decrease in electricity costs once the new lighting has been installed.

The insurance increase is inflationary, as is the website domain name renewal.

NCALC is the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils. The subscription fee pays for membership of NCALC and of NALC, the National Association of Local Councils. The subscription is based on the number of electorates, which for Farthinghoe and Steane increased from 329 to 358, resulting in the cost increase. The internal audit is conducted by NCALC, which reflects the same increase.

A full breakdown of the accounts is now uploaded monthly to the website so that at any time, parishioners will be able to see the current funding status for the parish.

#### Playpark funds

Opening balance at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017: £2,192.34

Income received in the year		Expenditure in the year	
None		Parking bollards	£36.00
TOTAL	£0.00	TOTAL	(£36.00)
Opening Balance	£2,192.34		
Income received	£0.00		
Monies paid out	(£36.00)		
Closing Balance at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	<b>£2,156.34</b>		

**Defibrillator funds**

Opening balance at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017: £0.00

Income received in the year		Expenditure in the year	
Film nights fundraising	£101.40	Cabinet	£402.00
Donations from individuals	£150.00	Defibrillator	£780.00
Donation from Parish Council	£480.00		
Donation from Village Hall	£690.08		
VAT refund	£197.00		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,618.48</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(£1,182.00)</b>

Opening Balance	£0.00
Income received	£1,618.48
Monies paid out	(£1,182.00)

Closing Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018                      **£436.48**

**TOTAL CLOSING BALANCE AT 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2018:**

Precept	£7,159.19
Playpark	£2,156.34
Defibrillator	£436.48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£9,752.01</b>

I hope this gives an indication of how the Parish Council spends the precept on your behalf. The Parish Council will be pleased to answer any questions.

Pip Clayton, Clerk to Farthinghoe Parish Council 6<sup>th</sup> April 2018

APPENDIX 5 – FARTHINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2018

Farthinghoe Parish Council - Accounts to 31st March 2018					
			To 31.3.18		To 31.3.17
<b>Receipts</b>					
	<b>Parish Council</b>				
	Precept	£7,150.00			£7,150.00
	Transparency funding	£240.00			£340.00
	Chronicle advertising	£360.00			£120.00
	VAT returns	£306.16			£260.44
	Bank interest	£0.14			£0.06
			<b>£8,056.30</b>		<b>£7,870.50</b>
	<b>Playpark</b>				
	Fundraising	£0.00			£448.00
	VAT returns	£0.00			£53.48
			<b>£0.00</b>		<b>£501.48</b>
	<b>Defibrillator</b>				
	Fundraising	£791.48			£0.00
	Donations	£630.00			£0.00
	VAT returns	£197.00			£0.00
			<b>£1,618.48</b>		<b>£0.00</b>
	<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>£9,674.78</b>		<b>£8,371.98</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
	<b>Parish Council</b>				
	Electricity	£1,460.75			£1,356.96
	Maintenance - grass cutting, dog waste	£1,002.20			£1,027.20
	Subscriptions	£459.04			£443.74
	Chronicle	£715.60			£795.60
	Clerk's salary & expenses	£1,420.00			£1,420.00
	Income Tax - Clerk	£280.00			£280.00
	Insurance	£749.64			£720.70
	External audit	£0.00			£240.00
	Donation to defibrillator fund	£480.00			£0.00
	Land Registry (cancelled cheque)	-£30.00			£30.00
	Website	£52.02			£124.23
	Speed monitoring	£234.00			£0.00
	<b>Total Overheads</b>		<b>£6,823.25</b>		<b>£6,438.43</b>
	Asset purchase - computer equipment	£0.00			£736.43
	<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>£0.00</b>		<b>£736.43</b>
	<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>£6,823.25</b>		<b>£7,174.86</b>
	<b>Playpark</b>				
	General maintenance	£0.00			£50.00
	Health & Safety equipment	£36.00			£0.00
			<b>£36.00</b>		<b>£50.00</b>
	<b>Defibrillator</b>				
	Asset purchase - defibrillator and casing	£1,182.00			£0.00
			<b>£1,182.00</b>		<b>£0.00</b>
	<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>£8,041.25</b>		<b>£7,224.86</b>
	<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for year</b>		<b>£1,633.53</b>		<b>£1,147.12</b>



APPENDIX 5 – FARTHINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2018

Accounting Balances							
		Parish Council	£7,159.19		£5,926.14		
		Playpark fund	£2,156.34		£2,192.34		
		Defibrillator fund	£436.48		£0.00		
	Annual Total		£9,752.01			£8,118.48	
Bank Balances as at 31 March							
		Current Account	£9,617.67		£8,014.28		
		Business Saver Account	£200.64		£200.50		
		Unpresented cheque	-£66.30		-£96.30		
		Total	£9,752.01			£8,118.48	
Annual Accounts 2017-2018			Opening balance	Receipts	Payments	Closing balance	Surplus/ (Deficit)
		Parish Council	£5,926.14	£8,056.30	£6,823.25	£7,159.19	
		Playpark funds	£2,192.34	£0.00	£36.00	£2,156.34	
		Defibrillator funds	£0.00	£1,618.48	£1,182.00	£436.48	
			£8,118.48			£9,752.01	£1,633.53
Annual Accounts 2016-2018							
		Parish Council	£5,230.50	£7,870.50	£7,174.86	£5,926.14	
		Playpark funds	£1,740.86	£501.48	£50.00	£2,192.34	
		Defibrillator funds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
			£6,971.36			£8,118.48	£1,147.12

I am pleased to update residents on the activities of South Northamptonshire Council over the last year.

### SNC Funding

Funding continues to be reduced from central government grants, but with growing housing numbers and therefore New Homes Bonus, and retaining more business rates growth we continue to balance the books.

SNC continue to be successful at collecting council tax with 99% of all tax collected. The national average is 98% and SNC is ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the whole of the Country on collection rates. This is important as there is a worthwhile bonus for maintaining collection rates.

### Council Tax

SNC raised its share of council tax by 3% (£5.41 a year for a Band D property or 10p per week), making a total of £185.78 pa. The increase is in line with inflation. SNC keep 11% of the total bill, Northants County take the biggest share at 73%, the PCC 13% and the parishes about 3%.

A band D Council Tax bill can be broken down as follows:

Body	2017/18	Increase	Amount	2018/19
NCC	£1,111.87	2.98%	£34.76	£1,146.63
NCC Adult Social Care	£54.72	3.00%	£35.00	£89.72
PCC	£209.04	6.00%	£12.00	£221.04
SNC	£180.37	3.00%	£5.41	£185.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,556.00</b>	<b>5.60%</b>	<b>£87.17</b>	<b>£1,643.17</b>

In addition, individual Parish Precepts will be levied and charged for.

### New Homes Bonus

Unlike many Councils SNC still uses some of the New Homes Bonus it receives from new developments to invest in the local community.

Grants are awarded by the Community Funding Panel and application forms and details of the criteria can be found on the SNC web site.

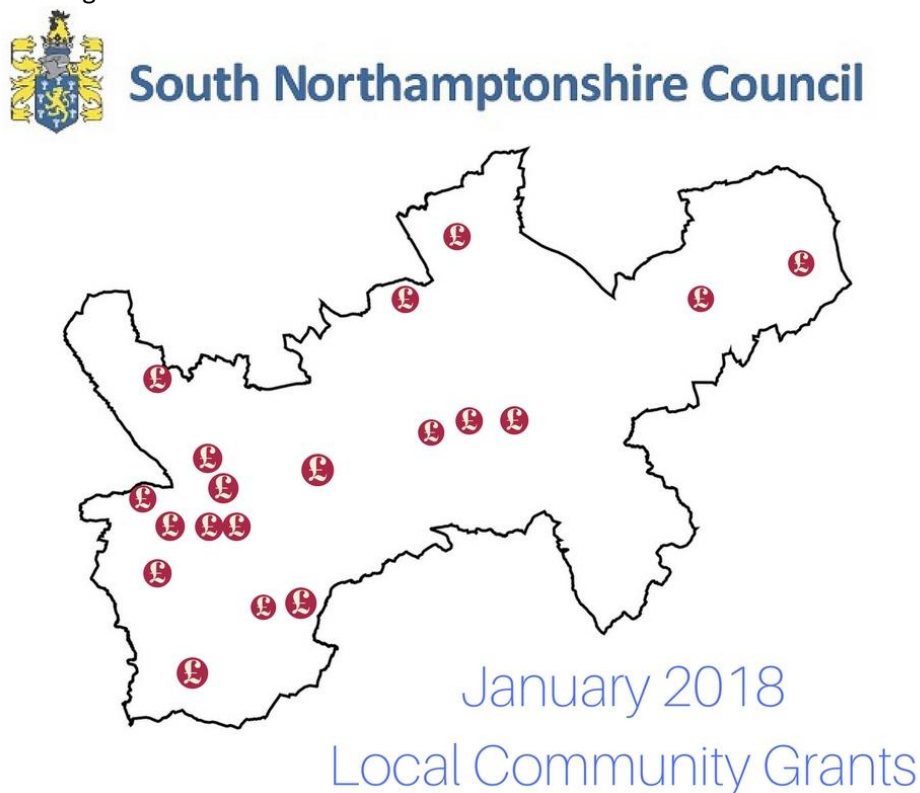
In 2017-18, almost £1.152m of grant funding was awarded to communities within South Northamptonshire across 120 projects. Over the lifetime of the New Homes Bonus Scheme over £2.6m has been re-invested in the Community.

Examples of grants made include:

- Syresham Village Hall £130k
- SNVB £75k
- Citizen's Advice Bureau £60k
- Kings Sutton Pre School £27k
- Towcestrians Floodlights £28k
- Old Stratford Street Lighting £19k
- Bugbrooke Sports Centre £18k
- Grange Park Community Centre £17k
- Northampton Historical Trust £15k
- Abthorpe Old School £15k
- Harpole Youth Club £15k

- |                                    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| • Middleton Cheney Football Club   | £13k |
| • Middleton Cheney Skatepark       | £12k |
| • Yardley Hastings Street Lighting | £11k |
| • Brackley Youth Players           | £10k |

The map below shows the geographical spread of grants made at the January meeting of the Community Funding Panel.



### **Waste Recycling**

Our waste and recycling service has had a very good year - SNC achieved 8<sup>th</sup> in the annual UK recycling tables thanks to our residents putting 61% of everything they dispose of out for recycling. A high level of recycling means that the total cost for waste collection is reduced as the greatest expense is disposing of the contents of the black bins.

The Council has just signed a contract with a new company for the processing of recycling. The new company is much closer than our previous one which means reduced transfer journeys by road. This saves fuel and reduces emissions.

### **Chief Executive**

A new Joint Chief Executive, Yvonne Rees, joined the Council in July 2017. She previously worked as a Director at Surrey County Council and Chief Exec.at Mole Valley District Council.

SNC have finally completed the joint working agenda with Cherwell with joint services in Housing and Development Management beginning in 2017. This now means that all our services are shared with Cherwell. We are using the strap line 'one on the inside, two on the outside' to describe our joint working.

The new Chief Executive commenced a restructuring of the senior management team. This will create additional senior level capacity to deliver on the many programs that are running across the two

councils. This has put a significant focus on developing income streams to the council and identifying commercial opportunities as this will be important as central grant funding dries up.

## **Planning**

### **Local Plan part 2**

The preparation of the Local Plan Part 2 continues. During the summer of 2017 SNC had a 10 week public consultation during which 1200 issues were raised from 400 submissions. These are being considered and in some cases changes have been made. The revised document will be subject to a 6 week consultation period in late spring 2018.

In the meantime every item raised from individuals and developers has been placed on the website together with an accompanying explanation.

Once the 6 week consultation period is concluded, the final review will be submitted to HM Planning Inspectorate. Following a public examination, as long as there are no significant issues, the plan will become law at the end of this year.

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

This year saw the first two Neighbourhood Plans (NP) (Kislingbury and Harpole) go to local referendum and become adopted as a planning policy document that SNC must take account of when making a planning decision in that parish. Both of these had substantial majorities and were supported by a large turn out.

Officers have prepared a Guidance document for Parishes/Villages to follow should they decide to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.

NP's are prepared by the community and at present at SNC there are two 'made' NP's and a further 12 areas designated as proposing a NP; at least five of these hope to have plans in an advanced stage within the next twelve months. Officers are also aware of some further interest from other areas within South Northants.

Whilst NP's are prepared by communities, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has a significant role. This is set out within the Localism Act 2011 and requires that, where NPs are in preparation, the relevant LPA is required to give advice and assistance to the parish preparing the plan.

### **5 Year Land Supply**

National Planning Policy demands that every council has a bank of permissions granted so development can take place in that area. The Joint Core Strategy determines that SNC must have available 1680 planning permissions for dwellings over a rolling 5 year time frame. National Planning Policy also states that where there is not this 5 year land supply then there should be a presumption in favour of development regardless of village confines and other planning tools that the council can rely on.

If an applicant can show less than 5 years land supply it becomes a lot easier to get planning permission, especially in places that would be unlikely in normal circumstances. This then becomes one of the main areas of contention at planning appeals.

At the moment SNC has a 10 year land supply, which means that the LPA can defend the district against speculative development that is not in accordance with our local plans.

### **Conservation and Heritage**

South Northants contains some of the country's most quintessentially English landscapes stretching from the northern Cotswolds to the gentle rolling hills in middle England. These landscapes are interspersed with attractive, largely unspoilt villages of medieval or earlier origin, the Roman town of Towcester, the market town of Brackley, and important examples of designed landscapes at a number of major landed estates.

The Conservation Strategy is a fundamental step to ensuring that our landscape is recognised. It sets out the Council's responsibilities and aspirations for the historic environment within the district, the resources that are available and a programme for how it intends to undertake this task over the next five years.

The district has 1,831 Listed Buildings, 96 villages and two market towns. Both towns and 51 of the 96 villages have historic areas designated as Conservation Areas, which have been updated over the last 5 years, recognising their special architectural and historic interest.

### **Local Planning Issues**

There are two large Rail Freight Interchange proposals in the District. One site is in Milton Malsor and the other immediately adjacent at J 15 of the M1. Each of these applications on their own will have significant impact on local residents and on traffic on the A43 and M1. SNC is being proactive in bringing issues to the attention of The Planning Inspectorate who will take the decisions about these major Infrastructure projects as SNC is only a consultee.

The EuroGarages proposal at J11 on the M40 has faced fierce local opposition. The application was withdrawn in February for further amendments and has recently been resubmitted. I liaise closely with planning officers at SNC in formulating a response to get the best possible mitigation for this area, while recognising that the site is already allocated for commercial use in Cherwell's local plan.

### **Brackley Developments**

#### **Leisure Centre.**

SNC aim to have the new 6 lane pool, with learner pool and other improvements to the gym areas completed by late summer 2018. Modernisation to the existing Spin Studio has been completed.

#### **Brackley Town Hall**

The Council provided funds for the restoration of Brackley Town Hall as part of the regeneration of Brackley Town Centre which enabled the Town Council to get £2.3m from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Town Hall will re-open this year.

### **Towcester Town Expansion**

An outline planning permission has been in place since 2014. The design code to cover the design of the houses has been agreed in the past twelve months and the detailed planning permissions for the first approx. 750 been granted.

Ultimately this housing development will bring a relief Road to Towcester. SNC have been working closely with government to get the relief road delivered early. The present agreement states it must be in end to end, by the occupation of the 1017<sup>th</sup> house. SNC want to get this brought forward and SNC has met with the Roads Minister, along with Andrea Leadsom, MP, to keep making the case.

### **Moat Lane**

Moat Lane continues to be developed with work starting on the corner site along Northampton Road for retail shops and apartments above. The work that has been done is of an exceptionally high standard and is a real enhancement to the town.

The Forum has some excellent conferencing and meeting rooms and is available for business and community use to hire and are some of the best available in the district. The Council chamber can be adapted for different conference styles and is also a great location to hold events.

### **Health & Wellbeing in the District**

#### **Youth Provision**

Brackley and Towcester Youth Strategy Groups are in the process of setting up as a new South Northants Charity that brings together groups within the community providing youth activities or supporting young people. The charity will help secure funding and enable SNC to do more for young people at a time of significant change and population growth in the district. Trustees will include key stakeholders from both towns and the surrounding villages. The groups are currently going through the process of becoming a Community Interest Organisation (CIO). One reason for a joint group is to have a more networked approach and trying to encourage larger youth clubs to work together, share voluntary staff and skills. It will also be easier to look at the skills and knowledge in the district and work out training needs for youth clubs and other groups and then delivering appropriate training opportunities for volunteers. The vision for both groups includes appointing a new youth coordinator, a full-time paid post, initially over 2 years to work for both Strategy Groups in supporting current youth provision and also developing new provision. This post would be of particular benefit to Brackley, where SNC see this person providing key skills and the time needed to support a proposed new Skate Park and Youth Centre projects. Funding is needed for this post and bids are being prepared for external funding sources. We estimate the total cost would be around £85,000 over 2 years.

#### **Horton Hospital Consultation**

A large part of the year was spent opposing plans for the reconfiguration of the Horton Hospital. Whilst it was disappointing to lose the Judicial Review in the High Court, SNC and others were successful in getting a referral to the Secretary of State on the proposals for maternity services and he set up an Independent Reconfiguration Panel to review the proposals and make any recommendations. This Panel has advised that decisions relating to the provision of maternity services must be looked at again and so the previous consultations are no longer relevant.

#### **Supporting Local Business**

Both our market towns have a new policy to help bring long term empty properties back into use. SNC will give rates relief on properties that have been empty for more than 6 months in the centre of Brackley or Towcester.

#### **Silverstone Heritage Project**

We have loaned Silverstone Heritage Limited £3m which helped them gain over £9m from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a world class facility dedicated to motorsports at the track. This will boost the local economy by bringing in many thousands of extra visitors and providing new jobs in the area. This is on track for opening in 2019.

#### **Taxi Licensing New Policy**

SNC licensing department has been active in making sure that the taxis and private hire cars in the district work to the highest standards including introducing compulsory Safeguarding Training.

A new scheme now allows passengers to rate their journeys and the best drivers will be recognised. Part of the work with taxis also includes training drivers to be aware of criminal activity related to vulnerable people relevant to them. All drivers must now attend a course to learn what signs to look out for when carrying vulnerable passengers and how to report any concerns.

### **Help for Residents with ‘Home Safe’**

The vulnerable, disabled and elderly are being offered free home repairs following a partnership between SNC and Care & Repair (Northamptonshire) Ltd.

The scheme, entitled ‘Home Safe’, will offer support with a range of small home improvements such as small repairs, home security and energy efficiency measures, gas safety checks, fitting smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, trip reduction measures, the installation of grab and stair rails and assistance with electrics, plumbing and carpentry.

The scheme is available to home owners and tenants on low incomes if one or more of the following criteria applies to them:

- suffer from a long term chronic illness or have a physical disability
- they have been identified by a hospital as needing urgent minor adaptations or services to facilitate discharge
- they are at risk of further injury or illness without essential minor works or services
- 65 or over

For more information on the scheme visit the [Care & Repair](#) website or email [office@careandrepairnorthamptonshire.org.uk](mailto:office@careandrepairnorthamptonshire.org.uk) or call 01604 782250.

### **Homelessness in SNC**

Homelessness is on the increase both nationally and in South Northamptonshire, with more identified rough sleepers and more households seeking assistance. There were 72% more homeless applications in 2016/17 than 2015/16.

Rough sleeping numbers are low in South Northamptonshire but are increasing. The 2016 Rough Sleeper Estimate returned a total of 3 verified rough sleepers, an increase from 2015’s total of zero.

The Council has established the following services in order to meet demand:

- The Council has a successful Deposit Guarantee/Rent In Advance scheme that helped 72 households in the last 18 months.
- The Council has a Tenancy Support Worker, focussed on supporting those going through homelessness crisis or to avoid a crisis; 130 households supported in 2 years.
- The Council is funding a Personal Transitions Coach to work with homeless households in moving forward, developing skills and assets.
- The Council has a Homeless Prevention Fund to help with low level costs to save tenancies, where temporary accommodation would be costly.
- The Council has a Housing Allocations Policy, which prioritises households at risk of homelessness.
- The Council has three dedicated Housing Options Officers, whose role it is to prevent and relieve homelessness wherever possible.

### **And Finally**

The situation at Northants County Council will of course have a major impact on Local Government organisation in this area. This is covered in more detail in my County Council report, but SNC will be proactive in putting forward its ideas about how reorganisation might look. Any solution SNC puts

## APPENDIX 6 – SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

forward will need to recognise the impact on Cherwell District Council, because of the close working between the two.

District Councillor Rebecca Breese



## Funding

### Central Revenue Grant

The bulk of Northamptonshire's funding comes from a central government grant. Whitehall announced some years ago that this source of funding would end in 2020 and councils would need to move towards locally raised revenue. The principal source of this funding will be from rates retention from Non Domestic Rates. The government has set up pilots to examine how this will work – we are not one of these pilots. Because some Local Authorities will be more successful in raising funds from this source the government is still trying to work out how it will even out the inequalities across the country.

For now: Northants County Council gets £673 per person per annum (population based on 2011 census figures) compared to London Boroughs which receive in excess of £1,000. East Sussex gets £159 more per person – (£832 pp).

### Council Tax

NCC raised its share of council tax by 2.98% - the maximum possible as well as taking advantage of the additional 3% for Adult Social Care. The increase is in line with inflation. Northants County take 73% of the total bill, the PCC 13%, SNC 11% and the parishes about 3%.

A band D Council Tax bill can be broken down as follows:

Body	2017/18	Increase	Amount	2018/19
NCC	£1,111.87	2.98%	£34.76	£1,146.63
NCC Adult Social Care	£54.72	3.00%	£35.00	£89.72
PCC	£209.04	6.00%	£12.00	£221.04
SNC	£180.37	3.00%	£5.41	£185.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,556.00</b>	<b>5.60%</b>	<b>£87.17</b>	<b>£1,643.17</b>

In addition, individual Parish Precepts will be levied and charged for

### Chief Executive

Paul Blantern left the authority in October last year when it became clear the extent of executive failings in the governance of NCC. A 'professional interim' chief executive was then appointed who left after the publication of the Value for Money (VFM) report in Mid March.

An in house officer has now stepped up to the role as the way forward is established.

### Value For Money Inspection:

The Government inspector delivered a harsh analysis of how NCC has been using its funds over the last few years. He included a finding that NCC were not 'unduly' more badly funded than other local authorities. However - NCC received £673 per head of population last year. This compares with an average per head for a metropolitan local authority of nearly £1100 and for example Sussex County Council an additional £150 per head. Metropolitan Local Authorities have the benefit of concentrated populations to deliver services too as well as lucrative money raising opportunities such as parking and parking penalties! NCC and other shire counties have to deliver

the same services to a more dispersed population which increases the delivery costs and generally do not have the same revenue raising opportunities.

The National Audit Office has, this in the last couple of weeks, raised the alarm that County Council's are chronically underfunded and other authorities are on the cusp of a similar outcome as Northamptonshire over the coming months.

Additional pressures stem from the decision in 2010 to keep the council tax base as low as possible following the economic crisis starting in 2008. Decisions taken then have had an impact on the council tax base today, and a c20% increase in council tax today would be required to cover the deficit.

There are some interesting stats at NCC. The total spend by NCC this year was £429m. By far the largest is spent on adult social care for the both the elderly and vulnerable adults. This is a statutory duty and a member of the public who asks for an assessment is entitled to have one. In broad figures there are just over 6000 vulnerable adults being supported by NCC and the total spend is £190m. The population of over 85's with complex care needs requiring help from the council has increased by 30% in 3 years. The next largest is childrens' services costing around £147m. In 2016 there were 900 looked after children. Now, in excess of 1050. Put bluntly 70% of the budget is spent on 3% of the population. This is funding that has to stretch across those that have a statutory entitlement for support. In addition there are unexpected pressures like the court decision to entitle carers who sleep at a client's home overnight, to be paid an hourly rate, not a fixed allowance and payments are backdated for six years. For NCC this will be an immediate hit of £6m. The other 30% of council expenditure is on services like waste disposal, highways, bus passes, libraries and trading standards. I was warned last year that the public's biggest concern is the state of the highways – potholes, resurfacing, road maintenance. Funding for these essential services now comes from what is left over, with the occasional top up via grant funding. After the hard winter we have just had, the country's roads suffer further decline and my postbag gets bigger.

Another element that I and other new councillors quickly became aware of was the working culture at NCC, both amongst the senior officer core and councillors on the cabinet. There appeared to be a complete separation between the executive (cabinet) and back benchers. It was the norm for backbench members like me – who had constituency issues, to only be able to seek answers through the director level or their assistants, or via the relevant cabinet member. That made it very difficult to get detailed answers from relevant staff who were delivering services. It also meant that effective scrutiny was curtailed. For me, this is most dramatically evident in the decisions around the 'Next Generation Council' which where the plans by the chief executive and council leader, at the time, to create a federation model of companies called Next Generation Council to deliver services with only a small officer core directly employed by the council for some executive functions. In 2016 I gave talks to my district council parishes stating that I did not have a clear understanding of how the structure would work, save money and generate income in a reasonable time frame and I expressed my dismay at how much the endeavour was costing to implement. The Chief Executive heard about my talk and rang the Chief Executive of SNC to complain about me. I wasn't even an NCC councillor!

The inspector made one statement in his report which I think stands out. He commented that 'In Local Government there is no substitute for doing boring really well. Only when you have a solid foundation can you innovate.'

So what's next:

The message from central government is that Northamptonshire must reorganise itself into Unitary Authorities. Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State for Local Government has indicated that, essentially, it should be more than one but less than three. The model put forward in the inspection report split the county into two, Daventry, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire could form one, the other 4 districts would form the other unitary. There is a complication however for South Northamptonshire, as we do joint working with Cherwell District Council in the delivery of local services and after 6 years of hard work, our management and delivery systems are now almost completely intertwined. This was ignored in the Inspector's report.

What is a Unitary Authority? It is one which sweeps away the County Council, and all the District Councils as well as Northampton Borough, and devolves all the responsibilities of the county and districts into a single authority. The ideal size of a unitary is greater than 300,000 and up to about 700,000. If you are interested in what a unitary authority might look like, I suggest you have a look at Wiltshire County Council. What is important however, is that there is local representation and the delivery of services like planning have local input and are not felt to be too remote. The reorganisation of local government may also give Parishes and Town Council's the opportunity to take responsibility for services which they are interested in.

Establishment of the Unitaries would give the opportunity to reset the council tax base to ensure local services are properly funded, and some mechanism will be needed to park the substantial debt that NCC has from PFI's and not saddle the new authorities.

Angel Square, which has been in the news frequently over the last few months, is a development that was funded entirely by the sale of several Northampton properties that the Council owned and were occupied by various NCC departments. As well as coming in under budget it is saving the Council around £30,000 per month in running costs. The sale has been put on hold for now, a move which I welcome.

Until decisions about the new form of local government is agreed, the Secretary of State has said he is minded to send in commissioners to oversee the running of the council. At the time of writing, there has been no further clarification of this position. But in the meantime, there is a new Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, a respected Finance officer has stepped into the Chief Exec's role, the Cabinet has some completely new members and back benchers (particular new councillors after last May's election) have shaken and stirred the way councillor involvement at NCC happens.

County Councillor Rebecca Breese

The PCC is keen to offer a range of weekly and annual festival services that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. For example, evening prayers provide a quiet traditional form of worship while the family service is much livelier. There are other opportunities within the Benefice for example Taize worship provides a more intimate and reflective environment for worship whilst opportunities are provided for people to engage in more outgoing worship such as that provided by the Sunday afternoon Pizza Praise within our benefice.

The church is open daily for private prayer with a more formal time of prayer on a Friday morning.

We have an open baptism policy in which children and adults are baptised as part of the main worship of the family of the church and this includes a communion as this reflects our pattern of worship.

We have continued to have special printed service sheets which many have said are easier to follow making the services more accessible and ensure that all are welcome to attend any of our services.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping.

The Benefice holds an annual All Souls service at which we remember those who had died this past year and others who people wish to give thanks for.

We have enjoyed another year of regular bible studies during Lent and Autumn with about 30 members from around the benefice attending.

Last Easter we said a sad farewell to rev Shemil Mathew our curate who has been appointed as the Chaplain to the Oxford Brookes university and wish him every success in his future ministry.

The annual church fete was well attended as were Christmas and Easter services.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church the lively and vibrant community it is.

We have been blessed by a team of volunteers who have cut the grass in the churchyard and helped to maintain the trees and plants on a regular basis as well as our yearly Spring Clean days. We have also been blessed by a team of volunteers who have cleaned, tidied and polished the inside of the church as well. The church wouldn't be able to operate without this very appreciated help.

We are also very grateful to Lisa Wenmouth for her playing the church organ at our services and we want to mention the work done by Rosemary Jarvis for the church and community.

Rev. Simon Dommett

## APPENDIX 9 – FARTHINGHOE ALMSHOUSES

It is with great sadness to report that Paul Hunter lost his battle with cancer and passed away in February. Paul had lived at the Almshouses for 23 years and is very much missed.

The trustees have ambitions to carry out major work to the 3 Almshouses this year which will increase the standard of living for the residents and continue to keep the fabric of the property to a high calibre.

An Almshouse will become available in the next few months. Please contact Jenny Forbes [almshouses@farthinghoeparishcouncil.org](mailto:almshouses@farthinghoeparishcouncil.org) or visit the Parish Council website for further information. Charity Commission rules and regulations apply for potential new residents which will be explained in the application pack.

I would like to thank my fellow trustees Andrew Bowyer, Reverend Simon Dommett, Victor Tolchard and Merry Wadlow who are all volunteers, for their continued commitment to the Farthinghoe Almshouses.

The charity receives no government funding and if you would like to make a donation please contact the above.

Jenny Forbes  
The Charity of Thomas Amphlett

## APPENDIX 10 – CHURCH PIECE CHARITY - FARTHINGHOE ALLOTMENTS

This year, 35 pieces have been paid for at £12 per piece. This is three less than last year, and there are now 5 pieces available.

Tending to the pieces and nurturing plants of your choice is a great way of both enjoying the outdoors and putting fresh, tasty produce on your table. We very much hope that others may be inspired to participate; if you are interested, please apply using the contact details at the end of the report.

The rules are simple but it is important that people should look after their boundary hedges, ensuring in particular that they do not encroach on public footpaths, where they could prevent safe passage for pedestrians.

The standard across the pieces varies considerably, with some being well maintained and beautifully presented, whilst others appear to struggle. Our keen gardeners are always willing to share tips and lend advice, so please do not hesitate to ask when you see others tending their areas.

I personally have looked after this charity for 30 years and Arthur Waters has also dedicated many years and I feel that it is now time for me to step down. To ensure that everyone can continue to enjoy the facility, I have made enquiries to find someone willing to take it over and hope to be able to announce an appointment very soon.

Ruth M Dashwood

Farthinghoe Lodge, Brackley, Northamptonshire, NN13 5NX  
Tel: 01295 710377



## **Brackley Neighbourhood Team**

Brackley Police Station  
St James Road  
Brackley  
NN13 7XY

### **Annual Report April 2018**

Over the last 6 months there has been a marked increase in thefts of tools from vans. This has been a national trend and not unique to South Northants. Officers from South Northants Neighbourhood Teams have spent some considerable time investigating this recent series of offending and identified a number of persons linked to a local Travellers site just on the Northants/Bucks border. On 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018 officers from Northamptonshire Police undertook several warrants within the site and arrested a number of persons. Searches yielded a large quantity of tools, mobile phones and number plates. In total 12 persons have been interviewed in relation to offences including; theft from vehicles, shoplifting and theft of fuel. Several other people are still sought for interview and those already interviewed have been bailed pending further investigation and forensic work being undertaken

As previous stated this is a national trend and although South Northants theft crimes have significantly reduced since 19<sup>th</sup> February people should not be complacent in terms of their vehicle security and reporting of unusual and suspicious behaviour.

We recommend that you visit [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk) to access up to date crime statistics for your area. Fortunately South Northants has no other significant crime trends and the Team are always happy to discuss any individual concerns.

Northants Police support local social networks such as 'Brackley Burglary Crime & Prevention', 'Newbottle & Charlton Crime Prevention Group', 'Northamptonshire Street Watch' (all Facebook) and other village networks by providing information and advice for circulation. We recognise the value of these pages for keeping a two-way flow of information between the police and the public. The above sites have provided very popular and all communicate with each other to increase their effectiveness.

We are still keen to expand virtual networks for the sharing of information to prevent, disrupt and deter crime, so if you would like more information on how to develop a similar Facebook site for your area please contact Sergeant Michaela SIMONS. These sites have enormous potential in assisting to make the area less attractive for criminals. Please take a look at the above mentioned pages for examples of content and rules.

Members of the community that do not use the internet or social media can obtain this information from Parish Councils and NHW Schemes.

Brackley currently has an active Street Watch scheme that is always seeking new members. Street Watch, in a nutshell, is the equivalent of a mobile Neighbourhood Watch. In addition it can cover the entire Community and tackle issues such as; vandalism, anti-social behaviour, drug abuse and dog fouling. If you are interested in helping your community and setting up a Street Watch scheme in your area then please contact your local Police team at Brackley for details.

Specific to Farthinghoe, over the past 12 months there were two thefts from dwellings and one burglary of a non-dwelling.

Visit our website for more information and updates:

<http://northants.police.uk/neighbourhoods>



Neighbourhood Alert is the messaging service run by Northamptonshire Police and was formerly known as Community Connect. It has been re-launched under the name Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Alert and now has greater functionality than previously, allowing our frontline police officers to send alert messages direct from their mobile devices to thousands of local people. They will be able to do this in real-time while they are out and about policing the county.

The alert service is free and simple to activate by registering at [www.northamptonshireneighbourhoodalert.co.uk](http://www.northamptonshireneighbourhoodalert.co.uk) and is available to anyone living or working in Northamptonshire.

After signing up to the messaging system, **people will receive regular alerts from Northamptonshire Police, Neighbourhood Watch and other partner organisations**, keeping them up to date and informed about crime, and issues relevant to them and the area where they live or work.

Alerts are received either by email, text message or voice message – whichever suits. People will also be given the option of what they want to receive alerts about, and how often – they will only receive messages about topics they have selected.

Many of our Neighbourhood officers and Response teams have been trained to use the alert system and are now regularly sending out messages to the public, including; crime alerts, missing person alerts, witness appeals and crime prevention advice.

This alert tool provides us with a really effective way to reach the communities we serve, improving the flow of information and therefore making a greater impact in the prevention and detection of crime and the reduction of anti-social behaviour.

There are already 10,000 local people registered with Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Alert.

#### **Contacting Northamptonshire Police in South Northants**

**999** for a crime or incident in progress and where someone is immediately at risk of harm.

**101** to report non-urgent incidents, crimes and for all other enquiries.

A link to Northants Police Website allows you to report a non-urgent crime online

<http://www.northants.police.uk/page/do-it-online>

For non-urgent enquiries you can email Brackley Neighbourhood Policing Team via:

[NeighbourhoodTeamSouthNorthants-Towcester@northants.police.uk](mailto:NeighbourhoodTeamSouthNorthants-Towcester@northants.police.uk)

Follow us on Twitter using @BrackleyNPT @BrackleyNptSgt

Brackley and Towcester Police Stations no longer have front offices for the public to visit.



Daventry Police Station still has an active front office which is open to the public 10am to 4pm Monday – Saturday.

**Examples of when 101 should be used.**



**In an emergency or if a crime is in progress call 999.**

**Useful Links**

Northamptonshire Police Website

<http://www.northants.police.uk/>

Check if a vehicle is taxed or untaxed and report if necessary:

[vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk](http://vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk)

Trading Standards – Advice and help for consumers – Don’t get caught out, find an approved trader:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Community/trading/Pages/default.aspx>

Contact CRIMESTOPPERS anonymously about crime:

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>

Fearless is a site where young people can access non-judgmental information and advice about crime and criminality:

<https://www.fearless.org/>

Report to South Northants Council:

Fly Tipping, Dog Fouling, Street Lights, Litter, Noise Pollution and other issues.

[www.southnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk)

Advice on boundary disputes with neighbours:

<http://www.rics.org/uk/knowledge/consumer-guides/boundary-disputes-guide/>

Street Doctor:

<http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/northamptonshire-highways/roads-and-streets/Pages/report-highway-problem.aspx>

**Brackley Neighbourhood Policing Team**