Minutes of the Woodford-cum-Membris Annual Parish Meeting Held on
Tuesday 28 April 2015 in the Memorial Hall, Station Road, Woodford Halse
Starting at 19.00 hrs.

E01/15 Present
PCSO Carl Barton [Daventry Police Safer Communities Team],
Mr. Darren Bennetts [Parish Councillor], Mr. Howard Burdett [Parish councillor],
Mrs. Kay Coles [Parish Council Chairman], Mrs. Robyn Davison [Parish Council vice-Chairman],
Mr. Gary Denby [Parish Councillor], Mrs. Jo Gilford [District Councillor],
Mr. Robin Gilling [Parish Councillor], Mrs. Elizabeth Griffin [District Councillor],
Mr. Patrick Knight [Parish Councillor], Mr. George Osborne [Parish Councillor],
Mr. Bob Patchett [District Councillor], Mr. Robert Snedker [Parish Councillor],
PC Ken Thomas [Daventry Police] & Mrs. Donna Wise [Parish Council Booking Clerk].
Mr. G. P. Smith [Parish Clerk].

E02/15 Apologies
Apologies were received from: Mr. Robin Brown [County Councillor],
Mr. David Hawes [Parish Councillor] & Mrs. Julie Turner [Parish Councillor].

E03/15 Minutes
The minutes of the meeting of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24 June 2014 were approved and
there were no matters arising.

E04/15 Police
PCSO Barton said reported crimes in the Beat including Woodford Halse had increased from forty to
fifty five in the past year. In comparison Weedon had suffered eighty eight. He introduced PC Ken
Thomas who is the Beat’s new permanent officer. There had been an incident in the Parish requiring
the involvement of a Police helicopter - a missing local man was satisfactorily located. There is some
difficulty with vehicle parking close to the Post Office in Church Street - the Police will look this.
The Chairman thanked the Police for their service during the year.

E05/15 District Councillors
Mrs. Griffin reported:
“You will all realise that a key concern of all of us has been dealing with various local planning
applications. It has been the priority of your ward members to prioritise the views of the Parish
Council and residents at all Planning Committee Meetings and, I must admit, we have been rather
forceful at times. Currently we are very focused on the possibility of a major purchase of land for this
community. Such an opportunity within the village itself will not come again and we will be judged
harshly by future generations if every effort is not made.
In more general terms across the District we have supported a low Council Tax, continuing front line
services, free car parking, sports & leisure facilities together with & critically for the future of younger
people, attracting inward investment for employment. Whilst the County Council is responsible for
education we are very vocal in calling for a wider education offer and have supported the new
University Technical College to assist in providing a higher skilled workforce which is being called for
nationally.
We did not welcome the Boundary Commission’s demand for the larger Ward but have sought to turn
this into an advantage by working together as a strong team when anything affecting the villages in this
Ward arises that requires a strong response. This can be anything for example the NHS services at
Danetre Hospital, the Police Commissioner and/ or Health & Wellbeing Boards.
It is important for local people to support and take an interest in the efforts of their Parish Council to
respond to village matters and also to take part in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan. Now the
District Council has a 5 year land supply the Neighbourhood Plan will also provide more protection
from unsuitable development and even whilst it is under construction it will be growing in influence.
I should like to finish by thanking the Chairman, Clerk and Parish Councillors for their efforts on our behalf and also all the local organisations which make this village particularly sociable and welcoming.”

**E06/15 Woodford cum Membris Neighbourhood Plan**

Mr. Snedker [Neighbourhood Plan Group Chairman] reported that grant funding for production of the Plan had been applied for and a meeting with Kirkwells Planning Consultants is imminent. All parishioners are very welcome to contribute and/or attend future Group meetings.

**E07/15 Parish Council**

Mrs. Coles reported another very busy year for the Parish Council, thanking County Councillor, District Councillors, Parish Councillors, Parish Clerk & Parish Booking Clerk for their contributions.

- The Village Centre had undergone much needed renovation.
- A public Meeting held on 09 April 2015 and attended by one hundred & fifty parishioners and interested parties had left Council in no doubt that it should pursue the acquisition of the former railway embankment & associated land [now woodland, bounded north by Byfield Road and west Phipps Road] for Parish amenity purposes. The Council is acting on this request.
- The viability of the Station Road shops is being adversely affected by the lack of vehicle parking in the vicinity. Options acceptable to residents, retailers & visitors are under consideration.
- Council had considered & given its observations on twenty fresh applications.
- The Planning Inspectorate had denied permission for fifty five homes on land off Farndon Road. There had been a concerted effort by all interested parties in challenging the application. A second application for the same site was refused by Daventry District Council.
- Construction of two hundred homes is underway on Grants Hill north of Byfield Road.
- The Planning Inspectorate is also considering a decision by Daventry District Council to refuse permission for the construction of forty homes on land east of Grants Hill Way [“Red Road” site].
- The local planning authority had granted permission for a hay storage/stabling building at Slade Lays, Eydon Road. The site operator had been unsuccessful in his planning appeals seeking use of the land and buildings for the continued business of dealing in used agricultural & construction machinery & heavy plant. Daventry District Council is handling the matter.

**E08/15 Parish Highway Warden**

Mr. Knight had dealt with many highway issues during the year however he was disappointed that despite a number of reports and requests Northamptonshire Highways had been unable to provide satisfactory conclusions. He was pleased that urgent repairs had been carried out in Sidney Road and that the roads and pavements throughout the Victorian terraces are being resurfaced.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Knight for his continued attention to these matters.

**E09/15 Parish Footpath Warden**

The Chairman thanked Mr. Joe Pitt for his following report:

“Once again the major concern this year has been the ongoing closure of bridleway AL7/FN24 and the bridge over the Cherwell. As councillors will know, Mr Beatty, landowner on the Eydon side, has created a temporary footpath so walkers can now access Eydon ... but the Equestrian parishioners are not at all appeased because this is not a bridleway and horse riders are unable to get through.

I have been contacted by members of the public who have been advised by the British Horse Society that we should form a protest group here in Woodford. Meanwhile I have spoken to Ms Katie Angel from the Right of Way Team at MGWSP and she is hopeful that the bridleway can be officially diverted over Mr Beatty’s land.

However, as the County Council have to be responsible for all bridges and as Mr Beatty’s new bridge does not come up to proper specifications plus the fact that the Flood agency, Environmental agency etc. have to be consulted (and also public consultations held) she did not think all this would be completed until the autumn! Now Gary Smith has emailed me to say the closure has been extended until next April “for work to be carried out”. I have no idea what this work entails and I hope Gary will
be able to fill you and me in. Meanwhile I put it on record that many parishioners are not at all happy about the situation.

I attended a day course on Rights of Way led by Dr Steven Hallowell, an expert on legal matters on footpaths and bridleways. It was very useful and from this I gathered that the closure of the above bridleway was also of concern to parishioners in the parishes of Eydon and Byfield. He suggested that the PC’s should co-ordinate their efforts.

He may be useful when it comes to ascertain the legal position of the Gravel Track which is part of the Jurassic Way and is threatened with closure should the railway embankment lands be sold. I have his email address should the council want to follow this line of enquiry. It would also be useful for a councillor to be on the protest group the Equestrians want to set up.

Other matters include the re-establishing of several fingerposts or signs where footpaths meet with a main road (top of Kitchen Lane on the Byfield Rd, and on the lane to Preston Capes near the top of Woodford Hill). I have again placed additional footpath markings, have liaised with the Rights of Way Team and dealt with enquiries from the public. It has been a very busy twelve months.”

E10/15 County Councillor
The Chairman thanked Mr. Robin Brown for his following report:
“I am delighted to be able to provide my second annual report as your County Councillor in the Woodford and Weedon division.

Friends Life Women’s Cycling Tour
Last May, we hosted the start and first two stages of the 5 stage “Friends Life” Women’s Cycling Tour through Northamptonshire. The cream of the international and Olympic cycling world participated with 300,000 spectators over the five days and a total of over a million television viewers which equalled the viewing figures of the British leg of the Tour de France. The event was an incredible success for Northamptonshire, both economically and for the prestige of the County. I am delighted to report that we have successfully negotiated 3rd stage of the 2015 tour back to Northamptonshire on 19th June starting in Oundle and finishing in Kettering.

Educational Excellence: Race to the Top
February 2015 saw the launch our “Race to the Top” strategy to raise educational attainment in our schools. We are aiming to make Northamptonshire one of the highest performing counties for education by 2020 by encouraging schools to strive for excellence.

An innovative Strategic Education and Skills Partnership Board will be created to lead the programme, bringing together education and business leaders. The project has the support of, George Osborne, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nicky Morgan, Secretary of State for Education and Lord Heseltine who has been working closely with the County Council to make this a reality.

Race to the Top has been prepared with collaboration with the Department for Education and has three main strands:
1. To identify and intervene in schools across the county which are judged to be failing or in need of improvement. These schools will be given time to produce improvement plans, with a promise of local authority intervention if they fail to improve.
2. An invitation to all schools to apply for a share of the £1million improvement fund for projects to improve young people’s aspirations. The bids will be assessed by a panel, including representatives from the business sector via Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership and Northampton University, and the Regional Schools Commissioner.
3. Sixteen new schools will be needed in the county over the next 12 years and the council will be looking for a number of top quality sponsors, with clear track records of success, to collaborate with the LEA in providing these schools.

Good educational attainment is a key cornerstone of the prosperity agenda of our County and we plan to engage local businesses & schools to work more closely together to provide better outcomes for our children.

Tri County Alliance
In December 2014, the leaders of Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils made an alliance, to work together with the three Local Enterprise Partnerships, (LEPS), to focus on their common economies of innovation, science, technology and creative industries.

Our strategic alliance is asking Government to allow joint new plans to be developed for transport, spatial planning and other key infrastructure. We want to devolve employment and skills funding so employers’ needs can be properly met locally, and support a devolved approach to the local trunk road network. We want enhanced powers over bus services and the ability to maximise public transport between key towns and cities and ensure the best economic benefits are unlocked from projects such as East-West rail and the connectivity of technology centres like Silverstone to the national road network.

Our Tri County area has a Gross Value Added of £45 billion, a population of 2 million people and is the equivalent combined Authority for Greater Manchester. We believe that by creating this alliance, we can find smarter ways to achieving savings for all three Councils and also secure genuine devolution of powers and funding, similar to the Greater Manchester model. It is important to point out that this alliance is not about setting up a super county, but is simply about collaborating on the issues that we have a statutory responsibility for. The alliance is still in its early stages and over the next couple of months we will be working out the details to present to the government after the May General Elections.

Our Infrastructure Programme
The County Council is in the middle of the largest infrastructural investment programme in its 125 year history. In the last five years we have spent over half a billion pounds. During the next five years we will be investing a further £600 million upgrading and building new schools, roads and Superfast broadband. Last year saw the opening of the £35million Corby Link Road and workings on upgrading key strategic junction pinch points. We are laying the basis for the next stage of the dualing of the A43 between Northampton and Kettering.

Other important road projects include the A45 Daventry link Road, the Weekly Warkton bypass and the A6 Chowns Mill Junction. The Kettering East Development will see the opening of the first of two new primary schools in September.

Work will also begin in the next couple of months of the County Council’s New HQ. This is an ‘Invest to Save’ project that will see the closing and selling of twelve old, expensive to run existing buildings. This project will bring 2,000 plus public sector workers back into the town which is an important boost to our County town and more importantly, will reduce our running costs and make significant savings. We estimate that in the first year of running, we will be £300,000 better off and in the next thirty years our annual operating costs will be half of what we would be spending on the twelve existing buildings.

The Council Budget and Next Generation Working for Public Services
The pressures on Strategic Local Authority services are immense. We have already taken out nearly £200 million from our base budget and we have another £148 million left to take our over the next five years. Quite simply, we cannot go on as we are. Our current operating model is not fit for purpose.
Over the next five years the costs of providing services due to a continued surge in demand and other pressures will rise by £104m while the money given to us by government will reduce by £79m. This means the cost of running services will be double the amount of money available to us. At our February Council budget meeting we passed our 2015/16 budget and our new Council Plan to meet these demands and protect front line services.

Our new strategic direction means that by 2020 we will see a far smaller retained organisation, the right-sourcing and commissioning of services from a new set of accountable organisations and social enterprises which may be owned, managed and run by current council staff. We will be using the Community and Voluntary Sector more in delivering vital local services and most importantly giving our service users more choice and control in the services that they use.

For more information on our council plan see our website

**Empowering Councillors Scheme**
Our Empowering Councillors scheme is as popular as ever. Countywide we have funded well over 2,500 community projects to the tune of over £2.5million. In my district I made sure my money has made a positive difference by funding the following:-
- £650 – WW1 Commemorative Clock and Weathervane

**E11/15 Woodford Halse History Society**
Ms. Julie Williams provide the following report:
“The History Society had another successful season. We have now reached a membership of 36 persons.
We had a variety of speakers on a number of topics:
- Ian Nunney [Curator of Wellingborough Museum] gave us a talk and re-enactment on WW1 at our September meeting.
- In October Gary Shaefler described Scott’s last voyage & showing photographs taken on the journey.
- Andy Chapman told us about the recent archaeology at Northampton Castle in November.
- December meeting, which was our Christmas meeting with wine & mince pies, saw Martin Heath tell us about the history of pantomime from the very beginning to the present day. This was an extremely well attended meeting as we had quite a number of members from Eydon Players present.
- In January, Jenifer Fell & Alan Flint again tested our knowledge with a history quiz. This has become so successful that they have been asked and agreed to give us another quiz next season.
- In February David Adams spoke on the history of Borough Hill from Roman times when a Fort stood there.
- Malcolm Deacon gave an extremely interesting talk on aspects of the Jurassic Way in March.
- Our April talk was given by Martin Sirot-Smith who told us about the village of Sulgrave as a precursor to our walk in May. This again, was an extremely interesting talk.
- Our May meeting will be a walk around Sulgrave to be led by Martin Sirot-Smith. This is our last meeting of the season and we start again in September with our AGM and a speaker.
- Finally, we have had a display case made for our Jubilee Plaque which was presented to us at our December 2012 meeting. It was displayed at last year’s Christmas meeting and will be given a home in Woodford Library for safe keeping.”

**E12/15** There being no further business/reports the Chairman closed the meeting at 19.45 hrs.