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This newsletter will be published on the Parish Council website
www.bedsparishes.gov.uk/northill-parish-council
with links to the community website www.northill-parish.info

COUNCILLOR CONTACT DETAILS

Keith Bennett	01767 223398	72 Hitchin Road, U Caldecote
Rebecca Brinkley	07773034251	40 Ickwell Road, Northill
Paul Daniels (Vice Chair)	01767 314328	92, Hitchin Rd., U. Caldecote
Tony Dawson	01767 627125	10 Ickwell Road, Northill
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Sally Mandley	01767 313812	40 Manor Place, U. Caldecote
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Rob Smith	07753 830927	159 Biggleswade Rd, U Caldecote
Tricia Turner	01767 627334	8 Caldecote Road, Ickwell

OTHER USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Central Bedfordshire Council- General Enquiries 0300 300 8301

Highways 0300 300 8049

Home and environment 0300 300 8302

Ward Councillor Frank Firth: Frank.firth@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
0300300 8564

Police (general non-emergency enquiries) 101
NHS Urgent Care Service 111
Power Outage Emergency 105

UK Power network 0800 169 9970 or 0800 3161 305



NORTHILL PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Representing Northill, Upper and Lower Caldecote,
Ickwell, Thorncote, Hatch, Budna and Bells Brook

Issue 38

Spring 2017

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Speeding in the Parish

Residents continue to complain to Northill Parish Council (NPC) about speeding. A recent police prioritisation exercise involving parishes in our ward showed that speeding was the primary concern, along with the lack of visible policing.

Although affecting all parts of the parish, current problem areas are the Vinegar Hill approach into Upper Caldecote, Biggleswade Rd., Upper Caldecote and Bedford Rd., Northill. A recent speed data survey by Bedfordshire Police showed that **30%** of vehicles in Bedford Rd., Northill are travelling, not just over the speed limit, but at a level liable for prosecution. Some vehicles were measured travelling at over 50mph.

Following the resignation of Mrs Jill Parker as the Speedwatch co-ordinator in Upper Caldecote, the parish now has no Speedwatch groups and NPC are keen to get groups set up in both Northill and Upper Caldecote. Volunteers need to undertake a training course run by Bedfordshire Police first (see page 6). In the meantime, thank you to Mrs Parker for the work she has done over the last few years in our community.

Northill Parish Council politely reminds you that the Clerk's postal address changed last year to **PO Box 149, Biggleswade, SG18 1AY**. We are aware of several letters and also a cheque that went astray

Recent Planning Matters

CB/16/03283 In January, outline planning permission was granted by Central Bedfordshire Council's Development Management Committee (DMC) for 40 homes on land east of The Pastures, Upper Caldecote. The outline application proposed 35% Affordable Homes (14 dwellings), the size and tenure of which is to be agreed, in an indicative mix of 35% semi detached dwellings (14), 42.5% detached dwellings (17) and 22.5 % terraced (9 dwellings)

CB/16/03249 In February, an application for 9 dwellings off Bedford Rd., Northill was approved by DMC. The vote was close (6 for, 4 against with 2 abstentions). Unhappy local residents, concerned about non compliance with CBC policy, Conservation Area issues and highway safety, have called the decision in to the Secretary of State, as have our MP, Alistair Burt and Ward Councillor, Cllr Frank Firth. NPC supports their action, although it has not itself called the decision in. It may be some weeks before the outcome is known.

Woodlands Nursery NPC continues to receive complaints about lorries entering the site at the Biggleswade Rd entrance, at all times of day and night, with resulting disturbance to residents opposite from noise, dust and vehicle parking issues. The site owner has permission to use that entrance for his own business, 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week. NPC continues to work with him and all affected to achieve a solution, and is currently awaiting the results of a complete overview of planning on the site by the business. A relief access road further east requires capital input, before it can be actioned.

CB15/02583 The outcome of the landowner's Appeal at Grange Lane, Lower Caldecote is still unknown. The appellant's representatives argued that highway safety was not a problem, and that the site was sustainable because there was a timetabled bus service and footway and/or footpath access to local shops. The residents of Lower Caldecote that were present disagreed!

CB16/05595 Approval has recently been granted for 3 four bed dwellings at the east end of Biggleswade Rd.

Tesco's Bags of Help Footpath link

The footpath link along Vinegar Hill to join FP11 to FP14 was finished last month. The work was fully funded by a grant of £8,000 from Tesco's Bags of Help Scheme, paid for by the 5p costs of plastic bags at that supermarket. A small amount of grant money is left over, and it is planned to use it to put a plaque on the footpath sign acknowledging this.

Other ideas!

Many village organisations are borrowing data projectors from other groups that have been able to acquire one. Is there any interest in a NPC data projector, which could be loaned at small cost to users?

What to do with the carved back of the bench from Ashby Drive? Please let Clerk know of any suggestions!

New Bus Service

Grant Palmer's replacement 74 has got off to a great start in January, after the unfortunate decision taken before Christmas by Stagecoach to withdraw their bus service from Northill. Grant Palmer report that the 74 has carried over 4000 passengers in its first month of operation. Based in Flitwick, Palmer's is a locally owned family run business with a reputation for reliability and welcoming drivers. The new 74 will be very dependent on usage if it is to have a secure future - dare we say "use it or lose it" because it is the fares collected that are covering the operating costs. If you are looking to travel into Bedford or Biggleswade, this hourly bus service is a convenient and comfortable way of making the journey, so do give it a try.

Grant Palmer are also keen to promote the service as much as possible – please tell your family and friends and please contact them if you would like any timetables to distribute or have any bus related enquiries – they can be reached at their Flitwick offices on 01525 719719 or at

www.grantpalmer.com

Your feedback is requested

Please let a councillor know your views on :

Community Emergency Planning

The recent gas outage in the Ampthill/Maulden area has prompted CBC to encourage councils to prepare emergency plans. There has to be a lead point of contact in the parish, who would liaise with the emergency services, and filter down designated responsibilities to other organisations/contacts. Examples would be accessing village halls out of hours to supply shelter or refreshments to emergency services, or locating storage for home owners in case of fire damage to property.

Would you be prepared to join a small working party to draw up an Emergency Plan for Northill Parish? Please contact the Clerk, if you are interested.

Bus Shelters in the Parish

After a request from a resident, NPC has been considering for some time whether to re-install a bus shelter in Upper Caldecote, near Water Lane and on Hitchin Rd., Caldecote Green. They were previously removed because of vandalism and other anti social activities. Bus shelters of the modern, see through type would cost upwards of £1,500, and are not currently budgeted for in the next financial year.

Local Intelligence

CBC Trading Standards is asking for help in identifying rogue traders who might be selling counterfeit goods, illegally imported tobacco and spirits or goods to under-age children. For more information, contact:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/business/trading-standards/approved/scheme/asp>.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING UPDATE

New Website : Northillneighbourhoodplan.org

The Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group is about to publish the draft plan on its new website. Finishing touches are being made to the draft text, surrounding the policies, and the site allocations are being finalised. When published, we will welcome feedback about the draft plan from the parish, whilst we test it out with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and other statutory consultees. After any amendments have been made, the plan will formally be submitted to Northill Parish Council and CBC, and once accepted, will be formally submitted for examination by an independent planning inspector. The Plan will then go to a parish wide referendum, before being approved or “made” and becoming a legal document. We anticipate that all this will be happening very soon now.

Some questions you may have?

Q: I do not have access to the Internet. How can I see a copy of the draft Plan?

A: There will be some paper copies available from Steering Group members. Details will be on the Parish Council noticeboards when they are available.

Q: How can I send in my feedback?

A: We expect to be able to obtain feedback via a form on our website. Steering group members will supply forms with the paper copy.

Q: Who is funding this Project? It sounds quite expensive.

A: The Project has been funded so far by grants worth £9,000 from the DCLG, via their organisation Locality and grant administrators Groundwork. The last stages of the Project are being funded by NPC, whilst CBC will be funding the referendum.

Your Steering group is meeting very frequently now to meet these deadlines, and Northill Parish Council would like to thank them all for the hard work and time they have committed to this Project over the last two and a half years.

Looking for Funding for a Project?

Are you in need of some financial assistance for a project in the parish?
There are several potential grant sources available at present.

The Greensand Country Landscape Partnership (GCLP) is delighted to announce that it has secured £1.66m National Lottery funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to support an array of exciting projects which will help us raise awareness of the hidden heritage of the Greensand Country and to reverse the gradual decline in the distinct character of this beautiful and loved landscape. The Greensand Country Landscape Partnership has been formed by a range of partners in the area who will work with landowners and local communities to take a joined up approach to meeting the challenges in the area.

Do you have some patches of grassland or heathland that you would like funding to enhance?

Do you have a churchyard in which you would like to increase the diversity of wildlife?

Do you have any woodlands that could be better managed and would you like the money and skills within your community to do this?

Do you have any walls or other structures made of sandstone in your community that you would like to restore? (Not including the main church building or houses).

Is there anyone in the community who would like funding to carry out a heritage project which enhances the understanding of the natural, cultural or historic heritage of the place or improves the management of that heritage?

Would you like to create interpretation on your local footpaths, cycleways or bridleways to increase people's awareness of their heritage?

If you would like to learn more or get involved please see <http://bedsrcc.org.uk/rural/greensand-country-landscape-partnership/>

Or contact Claire Poulton on clairep@bedsrcc.org.uk

Northill Parish Council Grants to local organisations and voluntary groups will be being allocated this summer.
Apply to the Parish Clerk for an application form and terms/conditions.
Applications will close on 30th June 2017.

Car Parking Issueson Village Greens

NPC has recently had complaints about semi permanent parking on both Caldecote and Ickwell Greens, and about damage occurring to the edges of the grass verges. All our village greens, except for Thorncote Green, are registered to NPC, and are maintained by them for the recreation and enjoyment of all. Parking on village greens on a permanent basis, or for the advertisement of cars for sale, is not allowed.

.....and at our Schools

Please be considerate when parking at these venues. Inappropriate parking at Manor Place, Upper Caldecote is destroying the grass verges there, and is increasing road safety issues in Bedford Rd., Northill. Recently, cars parked on the east side of Ickwell Green outside Pre-School hampered the dustcart, such that it had to drive onto the Green and cut up the surface along the verge.

Do you really need to drive your children to school? Could you walk instead? Think how beneficial that is for your health and theirs!

The Great British Spring Clean –March 2017

At short notice, three members of the Parish P3 Group took it upon themselves to register and organise a litter pick in the parish over a weekend in March.



They collected 8 bags of rubbish in Biggleswade Rd., alone. The bags were then sorted and contents recycled where possible. Many thanks to Graham Hopton, Margaret and Wyn Morgan for initiating this on all our behalves.

Ickwell Green Perimeter Track Update

Parish Councillors and local residents spent a Saturday morning in December carrying out temporary remedial work to the worst potholes in the more heavily used area of the track.

The work to achieve a more sustainable and permanent improvement to the track continues.

There have been meetings with certain contractors and with the Conservation Officer of Central Bedfordshire Council.

Details for the specification, which includes attention to drainage, have now been drawn together and once finalised the Parish Council have agreed these will be forwarded to potential contractors to tender for the work.

By the time you receive this Newsletter this action will have taken place and the Council will hope to receive tenders back that can be afforded by its relatively small budget.

Other Green Open Space Matters

After a standard tendering process, NPC has awarded its grass cutting contracts back to the previous contractors, Andrew Worboys for the Greens and verges and David Granger for the Churchyards and Cemeteries. A map has been supplied to facilitate the mowing of the verges. We are aware that many residents assist us and also CBC (responsible for the Highways verges inside the 30mph limits) by cutting grass outside their homes. It does however mean that the contractor may not cut your area if it looks short, potentially leading to you cutting it all the time! We cannot determine when our greens and verges are cut, as we have to be fitted in with other parishes' requirements. Our contractor has also indicated that his mowers will not cut any areas where there is significant mole activity, in case his mowers are blocked up with soil.

The Pound Close LAP has recently had the dead shrubs removed, in their own time, by a "Groundforce" parish council team of Cllrs Dawson, Maudlin and Papworth. The mesh fence has since been replaced, and the cost of replacement shrubs is being investigated.

The Eileen Alexander Legacy Fund -Funding opportunities to promote physical activity for people of all ages in the Bedford area.

The Bedford Physical Education Old Students' Association (BPEOSA) are offering grants to promote physical activity. All applicants must be able to show proven demand/need for extending or establishing a physical activity opportunity. All involved in delivering the work with school age children will be expected to be DBS checked. DBS or disclosure checks have replaced CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) checks.

Grants are available to:

Groups or individuals looking to set up an opportunity for participation in a physical activity. These applicants will be asked to give evidence of their experience and qualifications in the area.

Currently active groups or individuals looking to expand work in a specific physical activity. These applicants will be asked to give evidence that their current work is well delivered and managed, is safe, sound and in demand.

Work with participants in the following categories are particularly welcomed:- women, early years children, those with a disability, older adult population and other under-represented groups

Grants awarded will normally be between £500 and £10,000

Funding will be given to schemes that show evidence of sustainability beyond the grant period.

Expression of interest Forms can be found on the BPEOSA website **bedfordpeosa.org.uk** and can also be obtained by writing to The Eileen Alexander Legacy Fund, c/o Ms J. McKeown, The University of Bedfordshire, Polhill Avenue, Bedford MK41 9EA. Please enclose a SAE.

The Awarding Committee meets four times a year. Following consideration of the Expression of Interest Forms, applicants may be asked to complete a more detailed Application Form.

We recently had a report of a resident sweeping dead leaves from their property into the gutter on the road. This is potentially a good way to block up our drains, which other residents frequently complain about. Please use the green bags, the collection of which has just resumed.

How to get involved with Speedwatch

Excessive speed through neighbourhoods impacts not only on road safety, but also on the quality of life endured by the residents. Community Speed Watch is a scheme to help people reduce traffic speeding through their neighbourhood. It seeks to promote safer driving in our local communities by educating rather than prosecuting individuals. Data collected by Community Speed Watch groups will be passed to Bedfordshire Police who may undertake speed checks and result in drivers being prosecuted. Community Speed Watch requires a group of at least two trained volunteers to operate.

Having registered as a volunteer you will be offered a training course run by Bedfordshire Police. The course covers the use of the equipment, training in conflict resolution and an option for basic first aid. The course can be arranged at various locations around the County. The training comprises of three modules and if all the modules are taken it will last for approximately six hours.

When a group decide to run a Community Speed Watch session they will arrange to take delivery of the equipment from the Police. The volunteers note the date, time, colour, make, model and registration number of any vehicles exceeding the speed limit. The results will then be forwarded to the Police who then arrange communication with the registered keeper of the vehicle, informing them that the vehicle was detected exceeding the speed limit, giving the location, date and time. Persistent speeders will receive a second letter but on the third occasion they can expect further action to be taken by the police.

For more information, contact
speedwatch@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

A1/Black Cat Road Improvements

The fourth A1 Stakeholder group reported recently. There does not appear to be any progress made with regard to upgrades to the A1, since the group's last report in November. Currently, three options are being considered. Option A, moving the A1 westwards from Biggleswade to Alconbury is deemed to be the most expensive, but to have the most benefit. Options B and C do not involve any re-positioning of the A1, and involve grade separated junctions and changes to local area transport plans.

The A1 is now being considered in the changing context of the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon upgrade and the A428 scheme: East/West Rail and the Oxford/Cambridge Expressway. The issues regarding the A1 are complex, and although a tender is out for a study team to take the three options further, it is agreed that it is likely to take some time for any decisions, with delivery now post 2020. Highways England are looking at the possibility of average speed cameras in some sections.

The A428 Caxton Gibbet/Black Cat scheme has been published and is open for consultation from March 6th to 23rd April. It involves a new section of road to bypass St Neots, and extensive remodelling of the Black Cat roundabout. More information can be found at <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/me/a428-black-cat-to-caxton-gibbett>

Northill Pond

In January, Peter Phillips and Alan Rix, members of the Northill Pond Committee, reported to NPC's Finance and General Purposes Committee. They said that the pond was "currently in good shape ecologically" and "at its optimum with regard to biodiversity". Councillors considered various proposals for the pond, and resolved to plant wildflower turf along the western bank from the low wall to the poplar trees. The Pond Group has sufficient funds to cover the cost of this. Methods to try to control the duckweed continue to be investigated, and a working party to remove 75% of the reeds is proposed. The cost of a noticeboard, describing the flora and inhabitants of the pond is to be looked into, but it was felt may be too costly at present.