

# SWANTON NOVERS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 7:00pm

**Councillors present:** *Cllr. Chris Armstrong, Cllr. Jenny Anderson, Cllr. Viv Brittain, Cllr Gerard Eaton, Cllr. Hazel Mindham. Cllr Ross Keynejad & Cllr. David Harman.*

**Others present:** - Rosemary Leeder, Val Hart, Paul Reece, Rick Hadden & Ian Watson.

**2019/026**

## **Apologies.**

Received from -County Councillor Steffan Aquarone, no apology received from District Councillor Vincent Fitzpatrick (3<sup>rd</sup> meeting missed without any communication)

**2019/027**

## **To receive reports from the County Councillor and District Councillor.**

No report received from District Councillor Vincent Fitzpatrick (3<sup>rd</sup> time report requested and not received)

Report from County Councillor Steffan Aquarone – presented by Chair Chris Armstrong.

## **Update on Broadband**

When Better Broadband for Norfolk began in 2012, 11% of North Norfolk properties had access to speeds of 15Mbps or more. The County Council provided £15million funding which Government matched. This saw coverage in North Norfolk increase to 74% by late 2015.

“Take up rebates” (i.e. where more people take up new faster services than anticipated) meant £5.3million more funding came back to the Council from BT. Some district councils also made significant contributions. Together, this allowed the current rollout to take place with a target of 92% coverage in Norfolk by 2020. As at the end June 2019 coverage has already reached 95%.

This has been a welcome benefit to households and business across Norfolk, but it is widely accepted that the increase in speeds will only keep up with domestic demand for so long, and that many businesses (including home-based businesses and home working arrangements) already require connectivity far in excess of 24mpbs.

It is also generally accepted that continuing to fund Openreach infrastructure limits improvements to “fibre to the cabinet” whereas full fibre to the premises (FTTP) solutions are the long-term desirable solution. The additional benefit is that full fibre provides greater competition between infrastructure providers, and not just service providers.

The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review, published in July 2018, identified that approximately 10% of UK premises, largely in rural and remote locations, would be unlikely to receive FTTP connections by 2033. The Government’s response, in the form of the [Rural Gigabit Connectivity \(RGC\) programme](#), adopts an “Outside In” approach by seeking to ensure the final 10% of premises are addressed at the same pace as the rest of the UK. This strategy is widely accepted as being much more appropriate for Norfolk than the previous “best value” approach where the largest number of properties possible had to benefit from each round, leaving a hard to reach 5% left over.

BDUK has also adapted its existing Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme to support the delivery of full fibre connectivity in rural areas. In addition, Government is looking at options for how to clear and utilise the 700MHz spectrum band, a regulated and licensed part of the electromagnetic spectrum. Once cleared, this part of the airwaves will be available for future mobile broadband services such as 5G.

### **Mobile phone coverage**

Meanwhile, mobile phone network operators (MNOs) are approaching the 2020 deadline for “universal coverage”, which is a set of commitments undertaken by the MNOs during the last spectrum auction, when they paid £billions to the government for licenses to use parts of the electromagnetic spectrum for mobile phone voice and data services like 2, 3 and 4G. Universal coverage relates to voice calls and there are many parts of Norfolk that still do not have coverage.

Frustratingly, the County Council seems to have stalled in its attempts to market a large number of sites to MNOs to help them close the basic ‘not spots’. I asked Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick a question about this in Full Council in July, and will continue to push the County Council to do what it said it would do back when I brought the work I’d done on widespread ‘not spot’ surveying, and community transmitter site identification, to the table. One such example was the suggestion from Swanton Novers’ of a potential site adjacent to the village hall, which I passed through to the Council on receipt in January.

Furthermore, I am continuing to campaign for both these vital infrastructure improvements by supporting the creation of “Connected Norfolk”, a cooperative that is seeking to bring together stakeholders from across the public and private sector - as well as communities, infrastructure providers and such like - to lobby for a joined-up strategy for Norfolk’s connectivity.

Councillor Vincent Fitzpatrick was elected as our NNDC representative in May 2019. Since his election we have held three Parish Council meetings to which he has been requested to attend. Prior to each meeting a meeting summons was sent as well as a request for him to send a report if he was unable to attend. The only communication received has been the NNDC automated reply confirming receipt of the email. A discussion followed and the clerk was requested to bring this matter to the attention of NNDC Democratic Services for advice.

### **2019/028**

#### **Public Forum:**

The following matters were brought to the attention of the Council by Mrs Val Hart

- Missing footpath sign at the entrance to Plantation Lane from Little Wood Lane.
- Roadway signs obscured by vegetation
- Pothole in The Street
- Val Hart went on to say that she would personally be contacting the Astley Estate regarding the state of the ditches and drains throughout the village and especially in Plantation Lane, in the vicinity of Rudd’s Farm.

Cllr Gerard Eaton in response, suggested that councillors get together and walk around the village to see for themselves the reported problems and if they feel it necessary to contact the relevant authorities.

Rick Hadden requested that it be noted that the Astley Estate are not maintaining the hedges and fences to an acceptable standard and generally the Estate is in decline. In addition, livestock regularly break out of fields and are found on the highway causing a danger to motorists.

Ian Watson asked if the PC website could be updated and made more open and transparent showing the PC’s position on various matters.

Chair. Cllr Chris Armstrong in response stated that a meeting has been arranged with a website provider to explore the possibility of creating a Village Website to encompass all village matters to include both the village hall and parish council. This will be reported back at the next meeting.

## **2019/029**

### **Matters arising from previous meetings minutes:**

Cllr. Hazel Mindham asked if a date has been set for the public meeting on the provision of some social housing.

The clerk responded that so far, a firm date has not been set, but when confirmed it will be circulated throughout the village by way of a flyer delivered to all households.

## **2019/030**

### **To Sign the Minutes of the previous meeting as a true record:**

No additions or alterations were raised and therefore the minutes were signed by the Chair of the Council and the clerk

## **2019/031**

### **Correspondence Received:**

The Clerk had previously distributed correspondence from The Police, NALC regarding training and other courses available – No further information was requested.

## **2019/032**

### **Street Lighting:**

Cllr. Chris Armstrong informed the meeting that as a result of some complaints received about the intensity of the re-furbished lights it has been decided to fit shields to the offending lamps in St Giles Road and The Street.

HM Government's have been in touch with all parish councils requesting that they find ways to reduce the carbon footprint of services that they provide. It was suggested that the lights be modified so that they can be switched off at a pre-determined time but still come on at dusk. This could be fitted to some or all the lights and the saving in electricity cost would pay for the modifications over a period of between two and three years.

The Parish Council debated this option and others at length with no conclusion. It was however suggested that this matter is revisited at the next meeting where hopefully members of the public will be present and can be asked their views.

## **2019/0233**

### **Hi-Speed Broadband and Mobile Telephone Service Update:**

Cllr Gerard Eaton has been in contact with NCC. His report is reproduced in full below.

### **Broadband Update.**

Norfolk County Council launched the 'Better Broadband for Norfolk' initiative in 2012 and set aside an initial £15M of funding which was matched by the UK government. At the time only 11% of commercial and residential properties received speeds of 15Mbps or greater through the delivery of FTTC (Fibre to the Cabinet). By late 2015 FTTC coverage had been increased to 74% and the target of 92% coverage was exceeded in June 2019 by attaining a coverage of 95%.

Funding for FTTC will continue in order to achieve speeds in excess of 24Mbps although FTTP (Fibre to the premises) is the long-term desirable solution. The Broadband initiative will run until 2033 with the government advocating the 'Outside in approach', meaning the hardest 10% will be addressed at the same speed as the rest of the county.

## **Mobile Update.**

Under the 3G and 4G licensing agreements all MNO's (Major Network Operators) have an obligation to achieve 'Universal Coverage' by 2020. It is clear that this is not going to happen and the subsequent introduction of 5G technology provides the MNO's with justification for missing the deadline, claiming that 5G will eventually provide the required coverage.

Norfolk Councils progress with MNO's has been slow resulting in a council funded independent study of coverage across all networks across the County. This study was undertaken by AWTG using test handsets that were compliant with Ofcom's standards and defined measures and thresholds. The results of the study are as follows.

2G - 98.83% availability as stated by the MNO's compared to the AWTG study findings of 74.28% using the Ofcom approved handsets and defined measuring parameters.

3G - 89.74% availability as stated by the MNO's compared to the AWTG study findings of 65.68% using the Ofcom approved handsets and defined measuring parameters.

4G - 98.29% availability as stated by the MNO's compared to the AWTG study findings of 83.38% using the Ofcom approved handsets and defined measuring parameters.

Voice call performance was deemed acceptable when users were in coverage area - 82% call attempt success rate, 98% call completion, Quality of call 3.93 out of 5, call set up time 3.27 secs

Data performance was deemed acceptable when users were in coverage area - achieving 14.5Mbps download and 7 Mbps upload speeds

Webpage download time was averaging at 6.86 secs

86.46% of web browsing was successful

84.9% video download successful

A total of 5,000 km of roads were captured on the drive testing with 30 locations undertaken on foot (small villages). In excess of 6 million data points were collected and studied. Overall the current gaps in the service indicate that at present 20% of all calls will fail.

## **Actions from the Survey**

Norfolk Council DIEC (Digital Innovation and Efficiency Committee) to ratify and sign off the information provided by AWTG

Approve public release of the coverage maps and associated data - To be placed on the Council website.

Share findings with Ofcom and MNO's

Work with MNO's to facilitate early access to council owned property assets for base station and small cell solutions

Review the 'code of powers' based rental rates for council assets

Repeat survey in 12 months to monitor progress

## **Swanton Novers Parish Council Actions**

Met with Stefan Aquarone who provided a mobile update, contact information and full project report.

Contacted via email the DIEC project lead Geoff Connell with the purpose of

Providing Swanton Novers Parish Council Support where appropriate for Norfolk Council initiatives

Raise the Swanton Novers PC profile

Outline specific Swanton Novers issues with mobile coverage and service

Identify and offer potential site solutions for small cell deployment

Secure 'Sure Signal' devices for affect parishioners (Vodafone only)

Invite to an open PC meeting to provide an update and raise awareness of the DIEC initiative.

**Swanton Novers Parish Council - Next Steps**

- Follow up the Geoff Connell email with a direct call
- Arrange Geoff Connell attendance at an agreed Parish Council meeting in the near future
- Gain a better understanding of Parishioners specific issues with Mobile coverage via a door to door survey
- Use local survey results to support Swanton Novers push for Sure Signal and Small Cell deployment

**2019/034**

**Financial Report.**

The year to date accounts were presented together with accounts for payment. No questions or further information was requested by the Council.

**2019/035**

**To Consider Planning Applications received.**

No planning applications have been received for consideration since the last meeting.

**2019/036**

**Items for inclusion for discussion at the next meeting**

No items, other than ones previously discussed for inclusion were put forward.

**There being no further business, Chair Cllr. Chris Armstrong closed the meeting at 20:21pm**

**Signed..... Chairman dated.....**

**Signed..... Parish Clerk dated.....**

**Next meeting will be held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Village Hall.**

