

# FARTHINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

held on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 7.30pm  
in Farthinghoe Village Hall



Councillors present: Mr Ross van Geest (Chair) (RVG)  
Mr Mick Morris (Vice Chair) (MM)  
Mr John Grant (JG)  
Mrs Jenny Forbes (JF)  
Mrs Sally Thomas (ST)  
Mr David Dashwood (DD)  
Mr Henry Bankes-Jones (HBJ) (late arrival)  
County Cllr Ron Sawbridge (RS)  
District Cllr Rebecca Breese (RB)  
Mrs Philippa Clayton (Clerk)

There were twenty one members of the public also in attendance.

Apologies: None

Guests: None

ITEM	
1.	Welcome A warm welcome was extended to all speakers, representatives of village organisations and villagers.
2.	Apologies Apologies were received from Cllr Henry Bankes-Jones for a late arrival.
3.	Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 8 <sup>th</sup> April 2015 The minutes were proposed by Paul Rogers and seconded by Graham Thorley and were signed by the Chairman as a true record.
4.	Matters arising There were no matters arising.
5.	Reports: a) Chairman of the Parish Council Ross van Geest Cllr Ross van Geest provided his report, of which a copy is provided (Appendix A). He also read out the Financial Report for the year ending 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016, a copy of which is provided (Appendix B). b) District Councillor Rebecca Breese District Councillor Rebecca Breese provided her report, of which a written copy is provided (Appendix C). c) County Councillor Ron Sawbridge County Councillor Ron Sawbridge provided his report, of which a written copy is provided (Appendix D).

	<p>d) Safety Community Team (written report – Appendix E)</p> <p>Cllr Morris stated that no one was available from the Safety Community Team due to shift patterns so a written report had been provided, which Cllr Morris read out. (Appendix E)</p>
7.	<p>Reports from Village organisations:</p> <p>a) Farthinghoe Church and Almshouses</p> <p>Reverend Simon Dommatt was unable to attend, but had provided a written report (Appendix F) which was read out by Cllr Thomas. Cllr Thomas also read out the report from the Almshouses (Appendix G).</p> <p>b) Farthinghoe School</p> <p>The report from Farthinghoe Primary School was read by the Chairman of Governors, Graham Thorley (Appendix H).</p> <p>c) Mothers’ Union report</p> <p>The Mothers’ Union is formed of members from Farthinghoe and Thenford. They continue to meet on a regular basis.</p> <p>d) Church Piece allotments</p> <p>There are 40 allotments, which are all being rented at the moment with the rent remaining at £12 a piece. There are many more sheds and tunnels now, and most owners are working their ground well.</p> <p>e) Farthinghoe Playpark</p> <p>Cllr Grant read out the report from the Playpark Committee (Appendix I)</p> <p>f) Village Hall</p> <p>As there was no-one present from the Village Hall committee, the Clerk read out the report received (Appendix J).</p>
8.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>There was no other business and no questions from the public.</p>

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

**FARTHINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Annual Parish Meeting**  
**19.30 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

I would like to start by welcoming everyone attending the 2016 Farthinghoe Annual Parish Meeting. I am also delighted to welcome back this year our County Councillor Ron Sawbridge MBE and our District Councillor Rebecca Breese.

2015 was an election year for the parish council which saw all 7 parish councillors retain their seats in an uncontested election. The continuity of parish councillors has undoubtedly been extremely positive for the parish. I would therefore like to thank all of my fellow councillors for their ongoing passion and commitment to the parish, their hard work and personal support. I would also like to thank our parish clerk, Pip Clayton. Having very quickly revolutionised the administration of the Parish Council since joining in October 2014, she has this year truly cemented the processes and procedures which are essential for the efficient running of the parish council.

This year has certainly been a busy year for the parish council as we continue to deliver on the aims and objectives that we set out at last year’s APM, which were to protect and enhance Farthinghoe whilst improving communication with the parish.

***Communication***

Communication between the Parish Council and Parishioners continues to be enhanced at every opportunity.

- The new Parish Council email distribution list has proven highly effective this year, providing critical information and updates in relation to priority items such as the proposed solar farm and the resurfacing of the A422 through Farthinghoe. We now have 28 people signed up to the distribution list and I would encourage anyone that is yet to sign up to go onto the Parish website and do so following tonight’s meeting.
- Parish Council Minutes continue to be drafted and uploaded to the website within a few days of the parish council meeting. I would therefore urge parishioners to use these as the first port of call for real time information in relation to parish council activities. In addition the noticeboard next to the Fox has been restored this year thanks to Mike Phipps and this provides a further source of reference. Thank you to Christine Hunt for managing this noticeboard, which is available for any villagers to post items they wish to share.
- The Farthinghoe Chronicle continues to be a highly beneficial resource to the parish and feedback is always extremely positive. I would therefore like to thank Pip Clayton for all of her hard work on the Chronicle as the interim editor and to Oliver Cornock for taking over as the permanent editor last year. We are extremely lucky to have such a qualified editor taking charge of our small monthly production. In addition, Rosemary Jarvis\* does a sterling job of delivery come hail or shine for which we are very grateful. The Chronicle is extremely valuable to businesses in our village and due to this we have been able to reduce the annual cost to parishioners by pricing advertising more appropriately.

\* Footnote – It should be recorded that Mr Cyril Jarvis is also thanked for delivering the Chronicle around the village.

***Traffic***

One of the major issues impacting our Parish continues to be traffic. As such, traffic remains a high priority to the Parish Council and I would like to specifically thank Councillor Grant and Councillor Morris for their continued hard work on behalf of this parish in relation to this ongoing issue.

2015 saw the full resurfacing of the A422 through Farthinghoe which has been hugely beneficial to the village and especially the properties in close proximity of the road. The resurfacing has seen hugely reduced noise pollution as well as also reducing the amount of vibrations caused by heavy vehicles hitting pot holes, which was impacting surrounding properties. A further benefit has been the considerable reduction in road accidents on the A422 around the village.

At last year’s APM we reconfirmed our commitment to obtain a bypass for Farthinghoe, having been passed over for around 30 years. In recent months, significant progress has been made with Northampton County Council attending a number of Parish Council meetings to discuss the potential for a bypass scheme for Farthinghoe. In December 2015, NCC undertook an exhibition and detailed survey. The exhibition was well attended by the village with 140 attendees over two days. In addition 137 parishioners completed the survey, the results of which reconfirmed the parish’s belief that a bypass is required. Out of the two route options, the survey showed that the preferred route was to the north of the village. Farthinghoe Parish Council continues to work with NCC with the aim of getting a full bypass scheme approved for Farthinghoe whilst obtaining the best possible route to minimise the impact to the north of the village.

### ***Playpark***

At the last APM we advised that roughly half of the funding required for the playpark upgrade had been obtained and as such £20,000 remained outstanding. However, due to the relentless commitment of the playpark committee, the remaining £20,000 was obtained through a Viridor grant. I would therefore like to take the opportunity to thank the playpark committee for creating such an amazing asset for the village’s children.

Following the upgrade of the playpark, the parish council has been extremely concerned about the speed of traffic along Clarkes Road. Given this, Councillor Grant has been working with Highways to obtain a new 30 mph speed limit past the playpark along with new signage. I am delighted to announce that our requests have been accepted and we can expect to see the new speed limit and signage installed in the next month.

### ***Street Lights***

A great deal of work has this year been put into campaigning to replace the streetlights in Farthinghoe with LEDs. Not only would LEDs significantly reduce the annual electricity costs and maintenance fees but also provide improved visibility and safety in the village. This is particularly important along the A422 where visibility on dark nights can be very limited. So far we have not been successful in obtaining funding from NCC for the conversion of the lights on the A422, however we will continue our efforts to obtain funding moving forward.

### ***Village Hall***

I am delighted to announce that since our plea at the last APM, support for the village hall has increased significantly. The last year has seen a new committee member, a new secretary and treasurer. In addition, there is now a designated events committee to organise various village social events, the first of which was the Christmas Ball which was supported by in excess of 70 villagers. With a full list of events being planned for the rest of the year, coupled with internal decorating, the village hall is certainly back on the rise. I would like to thank everyone who is involved with the village hall for their ongoing hard work to maintain it for the parish and I would like to encourage as many villagers as possible to support the upcoming events.

### ***Maintenance***

The visual appearance of our village is something that the Parish Council attempts to maintain with extremely limited resources. There is very limited assistance from NCC and a very small parish budget for maintenance. I would therefore ask everyone where possible to help with the public areas near to their own homes whilst also treating the village with respect. In recent months there has been a significant increase in dog fouling which is a hazard to villagers, whilst parking and driving on verges has cut up the grass which takes a long time to regenerate, if at all.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a personal thank you to those that do get involved in maintaining the appearance of the village. Recently the village sign was restored and re-sited by Dave Clayton, Sue Abbiss-Stubbs, Val King and Steve Pillinger. Mick Morris and Dave Clayton have done a lot of work on the bus stop and surrounding foliage and a small army of volunteers assist with keeping the churchyard tidy. I would also like to thank Jim Jones again this year for continuing to pick up litter around the village.

### ***Solar Farm***

At the last APM we reported that the proposed solar farm development had been rejected by the South Northants Planning Department on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Green Energy was then given a 6 month period in which to appeal the decision but against significant headwinds no appeal was lodged. I would once again like to appeal for as many people as possible to sign up to our email database after this meeting as it is the fastest way for the Parish Council to warn the parish of potential risks.

### ***Financial Report Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016***

Please refer to the financial report dated 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016 (Appendix B).

### ***Precept***

Having maintained the parish precept at £6,500 since March 2010 we have this year taken the difficult decision of increasing it by £650 to £7,150. The increase comes as a direct result of the cost increases outlined in the financial report along with further budgeted price increases in the upcoming financial year.

Based on budgeted cost increases the Parish Council has set a budget of £7,050 for the 2016/2017 financial year. This will be fully covered by the new precept of £7,150 which will allow the Parish Council to maintain the current level of cash reserves which must remain in excess of 50% of the annual precept.

Whilst the financial report suggests adequate cash reserves of £5,230.50 this figure is artificially inflated by an unexpected transparency funding grant of £965 received last month. The grant was achieved due to an application for funding drafted by Pip Clayton and now allows the parish council to purchase its own IT equipment and further invest in the parish council website which in turn will improve communication and transparency of information. As such the true closing balance is £4,265.

Against the backdrop of cost increases, the Parish Council will continue to drive cost savings where possible. To date we have brought the management of the parish website in house and reduced the net cost of the Chronicle through increased advertising rates. Please rest assured that precept funds will continue to be spent with care on essential areas and with full transparency.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to attend tonight’s APM.

Ross van Geest  
Chairman

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### Financial report for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

In the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, the Parish Council have provided 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. The Financial Report therefore reflects this accounting process.

#### Precept funds

Opening balance at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015: £3,404.83

The precept for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 remained at £6,500 for the sixth consecutive year.

Income received in the year:		Expenditure in the year (incl. VAT):	
VAT refunds	£224.57	Street lighting	£1,167.82
Interest	£0.09	Grass cutting	£800.00
Limes Farm (Chronicle advertising)	£120.00	Subscriptions	£36.00
Insurance refund	£19.70	Administrational costs	£2,210.51
Transparency fund	£965.00	Clerk's costs	£1,700.00
Sale of old playground equipment	£100.00	General maintenance	£189.36
Total income	£1,429.36	Total expenditure	(£6,103.69)

Opening Balance	£3,404.83
Precept	£6,500.00
Income received	£1,429.36
Expenditure	(£6,103.69)
Closing Balance at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016:	<b>£5,230.50</b>

Item	2015 costs (excl. VAT)	2016 costs (excl. VAT)	% increase (where applicable)
Street lighting			
- Electricity	£524.26	£701.93	34%
- Maintenance	£359.00	£359.00	
Administration			
- Insurance	£528.20	£640.23	21%
- Audit fees	£155.00	£155.00	
- NCALC subscription	£135.17	£247.75	83%
- Chronicle printing	£796.50	£795.60	
- Election fee	NIL	£78.00	
- Clerk's salary	£1,400.00	£1,400.00	
- Clerk's expenses	£300.00	£300.00	
- Clerk training	NIL	£150.00	
- Website domain name renewal	£41.65	£41.65	
- Website hosting and support service	NIL	£61.88	
Mowing	£730.00	£800.00	9.5%
General maintenance			
- Dog waste disposal	£78.00	£78.00	
- Refurbishment of noticeboard	NIL	£45.00	
- Playpark safety inspection	£42.30	£42.30	
Council for Protection of Rural England subs	£36.00	£36.00	

Explanation of increases

The 34% increase in electricity costs are due to the unit costs charged by E.ON increasing from 8.24p per kWh to 12.4p per kWh which applied from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015. We have considered alternatives and NCalc have conducted their own investigations into options for small parish councils, with the conclusion being that we are on the best tariff. We are looking into the option of LED street lights, but with considerable investment being needed in the first instance, the Parish Council are investigating ways of funding this, including the possibility of grants or loans.

The actual year-on-year increase for the insurance is 1%. However, the new equipment in the Playpark has been added to the insurance policy for a proportion of the year, which has resulted in the additional 20% increase.

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. In October 2014, a one-off structural change in subscription levels was passed at the Association's AGM, resulting in the 83% increase shown. The Association represents, trains and advises the parish council in areas of legal support, employment, local Government finance and policies and was therefore seen by the councillors as providing an essential service to which we need to continue to subscribe.

The increase in mowing costs were due to an additional cut of the playing field being required plus the cost of cutting the verges increasing by £5 per cut. Having carried out a tender process for the mowing for the next financial year, we are confident that we are still receiving a very cost effective and efficient service in this area.

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**

With funds raised over several years and more recent donations in 2014 and 2015 from the Parish Council, the playpark fund stood at £9,900.00 at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

Opening balance at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015: £9,900.00

Income received in the year		Expenditure in the year	
VAT refunds	£7,550.00	Viridor	£2,044.36
R Sawbridge (CC grant)	£2,000.00	Playscapes	£45,300.00
New Homes Bonus	£7,715.00	J Hicks Safety Inspection	£300.00
Cocktail evening fundraising	£2,441.10	Safety Signs 4 Less	£20.88
Loans from councillor	£1,800.00	Councillor loan repayment	£1,800.00
Grant from Viridor	£20,000.00	The Fox	£200.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£41,506.10</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(£49,665.24)</b>

Opening Balance	£9,900.00
Income received	£41,506.10
Monies paid out	(£49,665.24)

Closing Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 **£1,740.86**

**TOTAL CLOSING BALANCE AT 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2016:**

Precept	£5,230.50
Playpark	£1,740.86
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£6,971.36</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

10<sup>th</sup> April 2016

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Farthinghoe Annual Parish Meeting 2016  
Report from District Council

This year, once again SNC are able to deliver a balanced budget, indeed we have ever so slightly underspent against last year's budget ensuring a small underspend can be transferred to reserves. The government has accelerated its plans to remove central government grants from local government funding, reducing this year by £600k. We anticipate all central government funding ending by 2020 after which time we will be relying on funding related to the development of new homes, some retained business rates from existing business and enhanced business rate retention from new economic activity in the district.

SNC felt it was prudent to raise council tax for the first time since 2010 by 2.95% - which equates to a £5 increase for a band D property up from £179.37 to £175.37 – this will help to ensure we have a sound economic base going forward.

South Northamptonshire Council is one of the very few councils in the country that has used a substantial percentage of the New Homes Bonus (NHB) for the purposes it was originally intended – returning 50% of the funds to the parishes that have taken housing growth. Most councils, because of the reduction in the revenue support grant, have subsumed the entire amount into the core budget. It has now become apparent that central government sees NHB as part of a councils' core funding, and government is now consulting on the future operation of the scheme. The government may well reduce the period of time NHB is payable. In addition they are looking at various ways of encouraging housebuilding throughout the countryside and one proposal is to deny NHB to any dwellings built as the result of an appeal. For a large development such as we have seen in Brackley and Towcester as well as some of the larger villages, this would mean the loss of hundreds of thousands of pounds to the district.

Earlier in the year, we were able to announce that a new leisure contract has been awarded in the district and as part of that contract a new swimming pool is being developed on the Springfield site in Brackley. Originally we were hoping to have a single six lane pool in a new addition to the leisure centre, but this has now transformed into a six lane pool, a smaller learners pool, a new suite of fitness rooms and equipment and overhaul of the other facilities in Brackley as well as some updating of Towcester Pool. SNC are investing £4.8 million in these new facilities, which will provide a return to the council of £400k pa. The present leisure centre contracts are costing us £125k per annum.

60% of all waste collected in the district is recycled – 11<sup>th</sup> highest in the country – as a matter of interest all black bin waste will go to an energy from waste facility from the end of this month instead of ending up in landfill. The cost for disposal is the same, just the outcome differs.

Real progress is now being made on the Local Plan part 2a. Why is it called that? Local plan part 1 is the Joint Core Strategy which was adopted in Dec 2014 and covers large strategic housing and employment sites in Daventry, South Northants and Northampton Borough. Part 2a is our local plan covering all the smaller sites in our district alone and Part 2b is a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show persons' site. We have to plan for these pitches but are doing it under a separate plan as experience around the country shows that it can be rather distracting to the main planning document. Last night I hosted the first information event for parishes at SNC, explaining how consultation works and what it covers and there is another next week. Over the next year there will be other opportunities to attend events at SNC to understand the Local Plan process

The Community Infrastructure Levy was introduced by our council on the 1<sup>st</sup> April. This is in its simplest form a roof tax on all new residential and retail developments. There are some exemptions for developments like self build, or residential extensions under a certain size but it is vital to note that

an exemption form has to be applied for (even if Planning Permission is not required) before development starts otherwise CIL immediately becomes due, in full.

CIL does not disappear into local government coffers but is spent on infrastructure in the district, and 15% is given to the Parish.

The new long stay car park opened in Towcester on Monday, with a further extension of spaces due later in the year. The existing car park opposite the forum becomes 3 hour restricted parking which will be enforced but this should start easing the situation in Towcester. Brackley parking continues to be a problem, a recent parking study has indicated a need for a further 68 long term parking spaces in Brackley – it didn't identify where that space might be!

Finally joint working with Cherwell and reform of local government. We continue to work well with Cherwell, delivering £1m in annual savings across the 2 authorities. We each remain sovereign councils with our own policies and make our own decisions for the benefit of our residents. We share a chief executive, directors and senior managers, while front line staff generally work within their own council areas, however joint working means that if, for example there is a problem with waste collection, staff can work across the district borders without delay. Central Government has recognised the achievement and transformation of our services by awarding substantial sums to promote transformation within our districts and we are used as an exemplar to other authorities. There has been much talk of unitary authorities and removing a layer of local government. A unitary authority in the 21<sup>st</sup> century no longer means just a city or a shire authority. Many different models are proposed, generally based on a minimum population size. A proposal put forward to create a new unitary model in Oxfordshire is proposed because Cherwell and West Oxfordshire, who have a joint working initiative with Cotswold refused to countenance anything that would undermine our working relationships. Approaches made in the past to Northampton County Council have failed to achieve effective change, and even now, Northampton's commissioned independent research is reactionary. How the unitary would work, whether it would work – we don't know yet. Residents in Cherwell are undoubtedly being told that they will effectively become part of Northamptonshire, which I am sure they are delighted about! Upon hearing about the proposals the County Council's response was that the loss of income from South Northamptonshire would lead to a decline in services in Corby and Kettering.

As yet there are no firm proposals, and SNC certainly has not ruled out a unitary authority of some sort with other districts in Northamptonshire. When proposals have been worked up, I believe they will be presented to our residents for consultation.

District Councillor Rebecca Breese

**COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT FOR FARTHINGHOE AND STEANE  
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

I am going to start by clarifying the position relating to the reform of local government, and I shall follow this with some information about this year's budget and the services provided by the County Council.

The nation's indebtedness has resulted in a squeeze on all council finances over the last few years and this has particularly had an adverse effect on county councils. The amount received from the government by both Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire County Council by way of the Revenue Support Grant has been reducing every year. Both counties have been faced with a situation where income has been decreasing at a time when costs have been rising due to three main factors, the growing elderly population, the increase in the numbers of children in care, and an increasing general population.

The County Council has had to find innovative ways of improving efficiency and reducing costs by linking with other councils to share back room services like finance, legal, and human resources. This strategy has been very successful but has its limits and to achieve further cost reductions there is now an urgent need for a major reform of local government. We just can't afford to continue to have the County Council, the District Councils, and Parish Councils. This is a structure which is confusing to the public and also extremely uneconomic. The removal of one tier of local government would result in savings by reducing bureaucracy and the costs of democratic decision making. A single council would be better able to meet the major challenges of a growing and ageing population, and also be better equipped to plan for the continuing growth in population by combining responsibility for housing, schools, planning, and transport. Such a council would reduce the number of CEOs and senior managers who are duplicated across the current arrangements, it would greatly reduce the number of councillors all receiving allowances, and it would also lead to a better utilisation of the building stock.

We need to reform the system before the situation worsens. The government is scheduled to completely remove the present Revenue Support Grant by 2020 which will mean that if we do nothing there will be no money for anything other than care for the elderly, disabled, people with learning difficulties, and children in County Council care. These are the demand led services. Local government needs to be reformed in a way which will have a substantial and sustainable impact on costs while maintaining, or preferably improving, the services provided for the electorate.

Residents of both counties will have seen the proposal put forward by the District Councils in Oxfordshire to form four unitary authorities, the most northerly one comprising Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire. I would add here that this proposal was done in secret without reference to Northamptonshire County Council or Oxfordshire County Council. This would mean that the whole of south Northamptonshire, from Kings Sutton in the south to the border of Northampton Borough, would effectively become part of Oxfordshire. I doubt very much if this would receive much support from the residents of Northamptonshire as it could lead to a massive house building programme which would jeopardise the rural character of this part of Banburyshire. Also, I personally believe the creation of four unitary authorities would not solve the financial problem as each will require a Chief Executive Officer leading a team of directors and senior management, with considerable duplication of effort and costs across the county. What is required to solve the present crisis is the formation of unitary authorities large enough to result in a substantial and sustainable reduction in costs.

The seven Northamptonshire MPs have written to the leader of Northamptonshire County Council asking him, and I quote *"to start the process of considering options for unitary authorities in our county and a re-organisation of local Government in Northamptonshire. We want local councils that can meet the simultaneous challenges of increased demand for services and reduced funding, and we believe*

*that simplified local government in the form of unitary authorities provides the opportunity to achieve that*". As a result Northamptonshire County Council has commissioned independent research into the options for the reform of local government. In doing this it is very important that the process involves participation by the County Council, the Borough of Northampton, the six District Councils, and all the Parish Councils. The report on this research will be available in the summer and this will then lead to consultation with the residents of Northamptonshire. I don't want to pre-empt the issue of the report but it is significant that the Department for Communities & Local Government has given advice that new unitary councils should ideally serve populations of between 300,000 and 700,000. This population size range is not absolute but ministers would 'ask searching questions' relating to proposals outside this band. None of the four unitaries included in the Oxfordshire District Councils proposal, the most northerly of which includes south Northamptonshire, meet this population criteria.

Finally, on this issue, I am not seeking re-election in 2017 so I can't be accused of trying to safeguard my position as a councillor. I do however want to see local government reformed in way that will ensure sustainable financial security while maintaining a satisfactory level of services for the public, and I am convinced that this will only be achieved by creating a unitary or unitaries which are large enough to bring about substantial cost savings.

Turning now to the budget for the financial year just started, the County Council is responsible for the services which are covered by over 70% of the council tax paid by residents. Two of the main services are Adult Social Care, and Services for Children and Families, with a combined budgeted net cost of £275m. All the other services have a combined net cost of £140m and include the Fire and Rescue Service, Highways, Trading Standards, Parks, the Libraries and the Record Office, Waste Management, and the cost of running the Local Government Shared Services (LGSS). To cover the increased cost of running these services the County Council part of your council tax has increased by 3.95%. This includes a special allowance of 2% to be spent specifically to help meet the rising cost of providing social care for the elderly and disabled.

Finally, I have to report on how I allocated my £7,000 Empowering Councillors' Allowance in 2015/16. This was as follows: £2,500 towards the cost of a footway at Upper Astrop Road, Kings Sutton; £2,000 towards the cost of a new Children's Play Park at Farthinghoe; £1,500 towards the cost of a Vehicle Activated Sign at Aynho; £1,000 to cover the distribution cost of 'Cheney Chatter' to residents in Middleton Cheney.

Ron Sawbridge MBE  
County Councillor for Middleton Cheney Division

8<sup>th</sup> April 2016

**Farthinghoe Annual Parish Meeting, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

Apologies for not being able to send any staff member to attend in person. Therefore I am going to issue a standard report starting with the crime figures, as follows:

**Farthinghoe**

Burglary in a Building – 1  
Theft – 2  
Domestic – 2  
Criminal damage to a Vehicle – 2  
Assault with Injury – 1  
Theft of Motor Vehicle – 1  
Public fear, alarm and distress – 1

With regards to crime in general, there has been an emerging issue relating to Theft of purses from persons using Supermarkets. Therefore we are asking member of the public to be vigilant when using such locations and to report any suspicious circumstances by dialling 101, the non-emergency telephone number.

Northants Police also supports local social networks such as 'Brackley Gossip Girls', 'Brackley Burglary Crime & Prevention', 'Northamptonshire Street Watch', 'Newbottle and Charlton Crime Prevention Group' 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 and are very grateful to the administrators of each site who keep this going. The handbag thefts recently have proved the value of these sites.

The above sites have proved very popular and all communicate with each other to increase their effectiveness. Every village/community within the South Northants area would benefit from developing a similar Facebook site to continue to expand this network of information and make the area less attractive for criminals. It is acknowledged that there are a lot of people who do not use social media and persons who administer the existing sites provide information to their local Neighbourhood Watch schemes for distribution via email or other methods.

If you are interested in developing a similar site for your area please take a look at the above mentioned pages for examples of content and rules and for more information please contact:

**Brackley Sector villages – Sergeant Michaela SIMONS** via [micki.simons@northants.pnn.police.uk](mailto:micki.simons@northants.pnn.police.uk)

The Police website also contains pages for your local area and you will find further crime prevention and personal safety advice. The Northamptonshire Police website can be accessed via: <http://www.northants.police.uk/#!/SouthNorthantsBrackley>

Members of the public can also contact the Police in confidence, via 999 in an emergency, 101 for non-emergency.

If you have some concerns and want to arrange to speak directly to a local Brackley officer then contact us via our email address: [SCT-SouthNorthantsBrackley@northants.police.uk](mailto:SCT-SouthNorthantsBrackley@northants.police.uk)

Follow us on Twitter: @BrackleySctSgt or visit the Northants Police website for updates, events and local team details: <http://www.northants.police.uk/#!/SouthNorthantsBrackley>

Kind Regards

PCSO Graham Suppiah  
Brackley Police Station  
Tel no 101 x345769  
Mobile 07557 778155

DRAFT

Rectors Remarks Astwick Vale 2015-2016

As I look back over the past year, it has had its ups and downs and like the curate's egg been good in parts. So I would like to thank God for the good things and ask him to help in the hard times.

It has been a joy and pleasure to help see revd Shemil Mathew grow over this past year and become more confident as a priest serving and leading God's people. Shemil has worked all around the benefice and has tried this past year to establish a midweek Sunday School at Farthinghoe among other benefice duties.

We have held another successful Benefice summer holiday club at All Saints School Croughton, and my grateful thanks to Mrs Helen Goulder for allowing us to use the school. The week ended with a wonderful celebration in church on the Sunday following. My thanks to all the leaders, helpers, cake makers etc who make it all possible.

As a benefice we have enjoyed much mutual support and encouragement at our monthly services. These take place in rotation around the five villages and are a wonderful opportunity to worship God with others in new and exciting places. Our worship together this year has been enhanced by the voices of the BFC (Benefice Festival Chorus also known unofficially as the Big Friendly Choir). This has included a special Advent service and on Palm Sunday and during Holy Week. My thanks to David Johnston for his help and encouragement with this.

I am very grateful for all who help and support the work of the church, with their time and support. I am very pleased that this past year we have been able to meet all our expenses due to people's generous financial support and hard work fund raising. However each year costs go up to run the church and it now costs over £1000 a month to run our churches. To meet the rising costs our churches have held an internal stewardship campaign this past year. I am not sure yet what the results of this are, but I hope the church members will set an example in their financial giving, so that we gain the maximum benefit from the current TAX reclaim allowance available to us. Then we will be in a good position to ask others in our communities to help support in this way, knowing we are not asking them to do anything we are not already doing ourselves.

This Easter we had the joy and pleasure of sharing the experience of Easter with the children from All Saints Croughton school, as they came into church during Holy Week and through a variety of activities got a hands on telling of the Easter Story. If you didn't pop into church when it was open you missed something very exciting.

Also this year we have had some very exciting and stimulating discussions in our two Bible Study series. We have looked at how the Ten Commandments affect our lives and also how our creeds or statements of belief also affect the way we live and respond to life's challenges.

All our churches are keen to grow in number, spirituality and support. This desire has been formulated into short documents called GAP's (Growth Action Plans). We hope that during 2016 we will be able to achieve many of the plans our PCCs have put together.

We have also been busy in maintaining the building for worship and have spent about £150,000 this past year, much of this has been from grants and other funding and my thanks to all who have helped raise the money and oversee the projects. At Hinton we have done a lot of window repairs, at Croughton we have replaced the chancel and nave roofs, at Aynho we are in the middle of some window repairs and at Evenley we are just embarking on installing a new toilet in the tower with many thanks to John for his work on this project.

This year we have supported many charities through our giving, and I am very grateful for all who have particularly helped to support 'Seth's Children's Home' an orphanage in Kenya that I visited with my family last year. This orphanage cares for about 30 children, giving them security, food, clothing and an education. One great initiative for this has been the Friday Soups at Croughton. Thanks to Jane, Richard and all who have helped my making soups. Farthinghoe Church now has a regular Friday Cuppa and Chat drop in where the coffee, tea and cakes are good and the chat is free.

Around our churches we have lost a few well known and long standing members which have hit our communities hard, but we have also had the pleasure of some new faces coming to join us, often as a result of a move into the area.

For me I am surprised how quickly time has flown as I am reminded that I have now been your rector for nearly 4 years. Although I have no plans to leave at the moment we must acknowledge that Shemil will finish his training next year and then be off to pastures new.

For me 2015 has had some sad times with the death of my father and our dog Gem being put to sleep. But through these I am more convinced than ever that God's love is for all people, those with faith and those with none. For at these critical moments in our lives we find how our faith helps us. I am pleased to be serving this year as an Honorary Chaplin for the USAF base and as the Rural Dean for the Brackley Deanery.

I have been constantly encouraged by those who join Shemil and I each day at Morning Prayer, encouraging us as we pray for the parishes and their people. For the 50 people who shared our Maundy Communion meal, for those who join, play and sing at our Taize worship and many others besides.

I would like to thank all church members who have worked hard this past year in growing their faith, helping in the life of the church, caring for the church building, helping our worship, doing all the quiet jobs in the background and so helped in any way to bring God's Kingdom a step closer. I pray that this coming year we will continue to help, support and encourage one another in our worship, prayer and witness to God's unfailing love in this world.

God Bless you all

Simon

**THE CHARITY OF THOMAS AMPHLETT  
FARTHINGHOE ALMSHOUSES**

The trustees of The Charity of Thomas Amphlett are pleased to confirm that the three Almshouses in Farthinghoe remain occupied. Requests to live in an Almshouse in our village is ever-increasing and all information received is kept confidentially on file.

This year, all the windows to the front of the houses have been replaced and trustees will continue to improve the Almshouses for the Residents.

A big thank you to all the trustees of the Charity: Andrew Bowyer, Reverend Simon Dommett, Jenny Forbes, Vic Tolchard and Merry Wadlow, all of whom are voluntary.

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact Jenny Forbes. Details can be found on the Farthinghoe Parish Council website.

13 April 2016

DRAFT

**FARTHINGHOE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
Main Road, Farthinghoe, Brackley, Northants, NN13 5PA.

**Report to Farthinghoe APM**  
**Wednesday 13 April 2016**

School continues to thrive and is oversubscribed with 43 pupils currently on roll, 7 applicants to join in September and 5 pupils transferring to secondary school in September.

**Outcomes**

100% of pupils transferring to secondary school last year (Sept 2015) met or exceeded the Government's target rates of progress in Reading and Writing. One pupil (who had a statement of special educational needs) did not make the targeted rate of progress in maths, the rest of the cohort met or exceeded the Government's target rates of progress and attainment.

Our value added score shows that our pupils continue to make better than expected rates of progress during their time at Farthinghoe School.

**Ambassadors**

The older pupils are invited annually to apply to become school ambassadors and take on responsibility for raising money for charity, looking after the school site, communication and road safety and healthy living. Our road safety ambassadors continue to develop initiatives to encourage parents/carers to park at the village hall to alleviate congestion around the school site.

**Music**

12 pupils take musical instrument lessons in school - guitar and violin.

We pay for a specialist music teacher to teach all pupils music each week.

Under a government funded initiative, all pupils in years 3 to 6 were taught a brass musical instrument for 10 weeks last year. Pupils are just about to start learning the samba drums - we are grateful for the use of the church for this!

Over 20 pupils took part in the Rotary Club of Banbury's Children Singing for Children Concert in St. Mary's Church. They joined with 4 other local schools to raise money for children's charities around the world.

**Sport**

We continue to purchase the services of a PE teacher at Chenderit School to lead training for pupils and staff and to allow for inter-school sporting competition. Pupils have been offered the opportunity to participate in; indoor athletics, gymnastics, multi skills, cross country, tag rugby, football and one pupil was selected to go on a gifted and talented training day learning about the physical, social and psychological demands of being a gifted and talented sports person.

**Extra-curricular activities**

In addition to the above we will be offering pupils the opportunity to take part in gardening, cricket and science clubs outside of the normal school day during the summer terms.

**School trips**

We acknowledge the importance for the children to learn 'outside of the classroom' and enhance their learning through the use of external visitors to the school and trips to relevant places of interest. In the last 12 months pupils have been to Sea Life Centre, Black Country Museum, Warwick Castle, Pantomime at the Mill Arts Centre, Milton Keynes Synagogue and British Motor Museum.

**Leadership**

As of the end of last term, Mrs Toman has tendered her resignation as Executive Headteacher and Mrs Bridson has decided to call time on her 40+ years of teaching. Both will leave at the end of the summer term with our best wishes. The search for suitable replacements is underway.

**Federation**

The governors considered responses to the consultation and decided that the time is not currently right to proceed with federation.

Farthinghoe is an outstanding school; it is an excellent school and pupils, staff, parents and governors all work hard to ensure the very best outcomes for our children. You should be proud of your village school. We are.

Graham Thorley  
Chair of the governing body

DRAFT

**Farthinghoe Children's Playpark Committee**  
**Report for submission at Parish Council Meeting 13 April 2016**

Overview of last 12 months

Following many years of sustained fundraising and community action, in September 2015, we were able to open our new park. We had an official opening on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2015 and a community preview on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2015, both of which were well attended.

In the intervening 6 months, the park has been well-used by the children and the equipment fully inspected and tested. Overall, we're delighted with the positive comments we've received and the enjoyment the park is bringing to the children.

As a committee and wider community, we continue to actively monitor and maintain the park. We remain grateful to Mr David Dashwood and his team for their continued support.

Outstanding actions

As part of the original Viridor and South Northants New Homes Bonus applications, we committed to evaluating the park once open. A quantitative survey of users – of all age groups – and follow up interviews with a smaller sample of users will both enable us to determine how successful the park in its current form meets the objectives we set for it in our funding applications and provide a springboard for any Phase 2 application.

The committee will meet in the next month to plan this evaluation.

Risks/ incidents

- There was one small incident prior to the full opening of the park in which a 4 year old child suffered a mild graze when he slipped on the wet ramp. We continue to monitor the equipment and no further incidents of this nature have been reported.
- Initial signage asking users not to park in front of the field gate was not suitable and this has subsequently been replaced.
- There has been an issue over winter with residual water under the nest swing and junior swings. This has been monitored by the contractor and we may consider any remedial action or resurfacing deemed necessary as part of any Phase 2 application.

Future plans

We are considering applying for further grant monies to extend the play potential of the park, particularly for slightly older children, by installing a basketball net and football goal in the far corner.

We will shortly be consulting with park users and further investigating the options in terms of equipment and grant finance.

In the meantime, we will continue to produce monthly inspection reports for the Parish Council.

*The Farthinghoe Children's Play Park Committee, 10 April 2016*

**Farthinghoe Village Hall  
Chairman's Report 2016**

Farthinghoe Village Hall is still one of the busiest in the area and we are told many times that it is the cleanest, brightest and tidiest in the area, which explains why the diary is always so busy. We survive on an income of around £8k per annum paying a cleaner, window cleaner and ensure all electrical appliances re PAT tested each year.

September's Village Show attendance was disappointing after the amount of effort that had been put into it; only 80 people paid on the gate. This year's show is themed towards Country and Western, so we are hoping for a record turnout.

We have just spent some money on the toilets in the Hall and redecorated throughout, with new front doors to be fitted soon.

Our Committee has grown this year with Pip coming as Secretary, we are very lucky to have Stephen looking after our finances, and three new committee members Ryan Jones, Ross van Geest and Dave Hancock.

Pete Hampson  
Chair

DRAFT