

Annual Report of Spratton Parish Council 2016-2017





Spratton Parish Council

Annual Report 2016-2017

Chairman's Report 2016/17

It seems like no time has passed since I was writing a report for last year but here we are again. In last year's report I said that the Council had weathered the difficulties of the previous year and that the Council would emerge all the stronger for the experience. The last year has proved that to be an accurate prediction with a strong team working together and very able and enthusiastic clerk in the form of Emma Gibson. Emma is currently undertaking the CiLCA course of training for Council Clerks which will clearly add to her expertise and ability to assist the Council in carrying out its important work of administering the resources available for the benefit of the community.

During the year we have two new councillors being Lydia Crawford and Louise Smith, both relative newcomers to the village and bringing invaluable skills and enthusiasm to the Council. This means that we now have on the Council, 5 female members and 4 male. We have a vacancy and a male or female candidate for co-option would be equally welcome!

The usual day to day work of the Council has continued smoothly and subject to some contentious planning applications reported on by the Chair of the Planning Committee, the major event of the year has been the damage caused to the Spratton Bridge and the subsequent single lane traffic and then the road closure. We were told at the beginning of July that the work would be carried out in mid-October with a road closure of 15 days. In fact it turned out that the work was not completed until early February.

Crime is a continuing issue and the police reports which are circulated via Peter Hunt through the original Neighbourhood Watch email list reminds residents to always be on the alert and to ensure they don't neglect their security matters. These could vary from securing their houses and outbuildings or being alert to the increasing number of online scams. If anyone wishes to be added to the list of residents to receive online relevant local information or wish to be removed from the existing list, please contact the Clerk.

We now have two trained First Responders in the village which are available for assistance when requested by the East Midland Ambulance Service. The two defibrillators fixed in the pub car park and on the Social Club on the Recreation Field are available by ringing 999 or obtaining the code from the Social Club or Pub, myself or the Clerk in case of emergency.

This year there have been two Litter Picks and in the future might even be more. The annual Litter Pick organised by Chris Saul took place successfully in March but owing to the closure of the A5199 it was decided that an additional Litter Pick should clean up the accumulated litter caused on A5199 during the road closure. Chris organised this and a record 40 people turned up on a fine Sunday morning and did the quickest and road clearing ever! Coincidentally, NCC have requested whether Parishes would be interested in taking over litter picking the streets in place of NCC doing it for

which the parish would benefit by about £570 pa. We have expressed an interest in doing this and are waiting for the next step from NCC.

You may remember that last year a plaque commemorating William Rhodes-Moorhouse VC was placed in the Millennium Garden and this year the Spratton Local History Society placed an explanatory board next to it.

We must congratulate NCC Councillor Judy Shepherd for her success in the local election as our county councillor and thank her for her services as well as our District Councillors, Barry Frenchman and John Shepherd, all three who often attend our Parish Council meetings and advise or inform us on various matters.

John Hunt
Chairman
May 2017

ANNUAL RESOURCES, STAFFING AND STRATEGY REPORT

Financial performance 2016/2017

During the past year that we have been in office we have administered the day to day running of Spratton Parish Council's finances. We have also made some positive changes in our Staffing structure which we trust now serves the needs of the parish more efficiently with its dedicated opening hours and up to date modern working essentials.

In the present current climate of "the financial squeeze" on our resources we have once again managed to keep the Precept for the year 2017/2018 the same as the previous year which leaves us with a healthy balance to cover certain contingencies such as possible liability for the maintenance of the church wall and the ongoing replacement of street lights.

In the past year two Defibrators available to the public have been purchased and are in place, one on the Recreation ground and one at the King's Head. In addition we have supported the training of two "First Responders" available via the Emergency Services, together with a Kit which also contains a Defibrator and the necessary first aid equipment. The Recreation Ground grass cutting takes up approximately £2,000 of our £3,000 Grants and Donation Budget and added to this was the repair of a broken roundabout which cost £1,260 to repair. Added to this we have financially supported the local Youth Club.

At the end of May 2017 we will be audited by our external auditors in relation to the 2016/17 accounts and our Parish Council practices. Residents can view on our Web Site our up to date finances or see detailed accounts which are available on request.

In conclusion, public spending pressures will continue to mean that opportunities to finance initiatives will become more restricted. We feel that we have prudently managed our budgets for the year 2016/2017 which will leave us in a position to address some future projects, whilst making clear progress on the priorities that are necessary. We aim to process and develop financial plans to ensure we look at ways of achieving the most economic, cost effective and efficient means of managing the business of the village.

J M Tindale

May 2017

Chair, Resources, Staffing and Strategy

REPORT PLANNING COMMITTEE MAY 2016

The past year has been a busy year for the planning committee.

The committee was enlarged from 4 Councillors to all Councillors earlier this year to ensure that all Councillors have an opportunity to voice their opinions to planning applications.

Due to the volume of applications it is becoming almost a monthly occurrence to hold planning committee meetings in addition to the monthly parish council meetings.

The applications considered are wide ranging from applications to prune trees subject of tree preservation orders, to larger scale developments such as the construction of 4 properties in Brixworth Road or the demolition of properties.

Many applications promote strong feelings by parishioners on both sides of the application. As a Council we listen carefully to all points of view in order to reach, what can be a difficult decision as to how to respond to a planning application.

When reaching our conclusions careful consideration is given to the Spratton Neighbourhood plan and whether the application falls within the parameters thereof and also the wider policies of Daventry District Council Local Plan and the West Northampton Core strategy. Not to forget that comments and observations made can only be material planning considerations.

Throughout the last year we have looked at each application on its merits and have made our decisions based on what we believe to be for the benefit of the village and its residents as a whole.

Sally Wilkes

May 2007

Chairman Planning Committee

CHURCHYARDS, CEMETERIES AND OPEN SPACES REPORT

2016/17

The mowing contractors, 4 Counties (formerly Countryside Gardens), continue to give a generally good service, helping to give the village a well-kept appearance. We welcome feedback from anyone who has any comments to make.

The newly completed computerised burial records of East View Cemetery have proved to be a great success and make administration of burials a much easier task.

The ash tree opposite Spratton Stores, and thus in a prominent position, has recently received some attention to raise the canopy and to thin out some top growth. Similarly, 2 yew trees in the Churchyard have been reshaped and both now look much better. We wish to undertake work on the Holly tree in the churchyard but this has had to be put back until autumn to give us time to get permission for the work as it is subject to a Tree Preservation Order, and also for birds to have finished nesting.

There has been the usual steady rate of burials and ashes interments in existing graves, but, to-date, still no ashes interments in the new area set aside for that purpose.

Bill Blowfield

CCOS Chairman

SPRATTON PARISH COUNCIL
HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2017

The Highways Committee has been in communication with N.C.C Highways, on a number of issues over the last twelve months.

The issues of Spratton Bridge have been covered in the newsletter, but I will say that we may be able to gain by work that may be carried out by highways we hope?

The highways committee is an advisory group of SPRATTON PARISH COUNCIL and therefore the full council makes the decisions.

Signed

P Vellam Chairman