

## **Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting**

**On 14 May 2017**

This is my first Annual Parish Meeting as Chairman and I am pleased to report on the highlights of the activities of Fernwood Parish Council during the past year. I am privileged to have a hardworking, committed team of Parish Councillors and to report on the work the council has carried out.

### **Council Members**

- At the time of being elected Chairman, the Parish Council had seven councillors. It was with regret that Cllr Jim Gould and Cllr Antony Barson decided to stand down this year. Both had spent a number of years on the council and their knowledge, skills and experience will be sorely missed.
- The two vacancies were filled by co-option and I would like to officially welcome Cllr Mike Hartley and Cllr Micheal Phelan to the Parish Council.
- Six Parish Councillors attended training last month which included information on the legal framework of a Parish Council, roles of councillors, Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and engagement with the community.

### **Council Staff**

- At the time of writing, the Council employs three staff, including the Clerk to the Council Caron Ballantyne, Assistant Clerk to the Parish Council Marion Fox Goddard and the Village Hall Caretaker Malcolm Dickinson.
- I would like to take this opportunity to thank the council staff for all their hard work this year, especially Caron and Marion for their work on the council policies and procedures, web site and Facebook page.

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### **Review of 2016 - 2017**

- **Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan**

- Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. Once adopted the plan becomes part of the planning documentation and used by NSDC when planning applications are being discussed and decided.
- The draft plan was made available to residents and key stakeholders and a number of open meetings were held, as well as making available an online questionnaire, to enable residents to give feedback on the plan. Feedback was both positive and negative with the ideas to resolve some of the current parking being the biggest issue. After a number of discussions these ideas were removed from the plan.
- The amendments to the plan were completed early this year and forwarded to Newark and Sherwood District Council. Before a referendum can be called an examination of the plan and associated documentation needed to take place. This was completed last month and the examiner's report is available to see on the N&SDC web site and will be available on the Parish Council web site within the next couple of days.
- Matthew Tubb the Senior Planner in N&SDC is currently liaising with colleagues in Democratic Services over Full Council and potential referendum dates, but with the upcoming General Election a referendum on the plan is not likely to happen until the end of September beginning of October.

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- **Barrett David Wilson Homes (BDWH), Larkfleet Homes (LFH) and Persimmon Homes (PH).**
  - As everyone is probably aware these are the developers who are currently planning developments in our area.
    - BDWH to the north of Fernwood between the village and the A1 and the area land behind the scrapyard. A development of 1050 dwellings.
    - LFH on the area of land (field) to the right Hollowdyke Lane, when looking from the Great North Road. To be known as Fernwood Meadows South a development of 350 dwellings.
    - PH to the south of Fernwood to the right of the LFH development on the area of land to the left of Shire Lane and the area of land to the right of Shire Lane stretching down to the A1. A development of 1800 dwellings.
  - We have held meetings with representatives of Balderton Parish Council, Claypole Parish Council and Coddington Parish Council to discuss the impact of these developments. The keys issues being the lack of road infrastructure in the area, the use of Hollowdyke Lane and Shire Lane once the developments are underway. These issues are current ongoing.
  - Another area of concern is the use of Management Companies within each development. Although we have very little direct communication with BDWH and the use of a Management Company in their new plans, PH are proposing a two tier Management Company for each phase of their development, three in all and LFH are proposing a Resident Management Group. With the experience of the impact of First Port on Fernwood Central and the associated additional costs to residents, the Parish Council is not happy that these developers intend to employ Management Companies in their developments. This issue is currently ongoing.
  - After discussions with the Parish Council and residents of Fernwood, Robert Jenrick MP has taken up the gauntlet in relation to the use of management companies by developers and due to him raising this issue it has been included in a housing white paper currently going through Parliament.

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- **Fernwood Maintenance Strategy Group**

- I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sue Taylor and David Heath in relation to their work and discussions with First Port. This involved the additional charges made by First Port when buying/selling your home, installation of satellite dish and TV aerials as well as the incorrect charging of costs of maintenance to schedule one.
- The result of this is:
  - Charges no longer being made for installation of a satellite dish and TV aerial.
  - The purchase of a sellers pack is no longer required as most, if not all of the information needed is available online.
  - First Port reviewing their accounts associated to Fernwood and identifying that:
    - Between 2004 – 2015 allocation of charges to schedule one was incorrect.
    - Overcharging and legal fees were also incorrect.
    - An agreement that a refund to residents past and present which totalled £45,245.19.
  - The setting up of the Fernwood Central Joint Management Panel which consists of representatives of First Port, representatives of the Fernwood Residents Association and representatives of the Parish Council. The aim of the group is to discuss and agree local projects and review First Port expenditure and annual accounts.

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- **2016 Summer Fete and Fireworks Night**

- We had a very successful, albeit wet, summer fete last year and I would like to thank the following for their assistance in organising the event and making it such a great day; Lucy Sheldon and family, Marcela Thompson, Kevin Hamilton, Karen Hamilton, Sophie, Shelby, Ram and Emily.
- Fernwood Fireworks were also a great success and I understand from feedback received that everyone that attended the event enjoyed it. The fireworks night for 2017 is currently under review due to the numbers of visitors from outside of Fernwood that attend the event and the associated Health and Safety, traffic and parking issues.

- **Fernwood Neighbourhood Watch**

- Fernwood is a registered Neighbourhood Watch area and the Parish Council attends meetings of the Local Action Group at Newark and Sherwood District Council, where issues of ASB, etc., are discussed and actions agreed.
- CCTV cameras have been upgraded at the Village Hall, which has included a number plate recognition camera. These cameras have been installed to cover the shops and parking area by the Village Hall and along with the cameras installed by the shop and Earls, it is hoped that ASB in the area will be reduced.
- As a result of information given to the Police, our Beat Team have visited a number of properties in relation to ASB and where appropriate, Section 59 notices of the Police Reform Act have been served and are valid for 12 months. If the owner of the vehicle continues to use it in an irresponsible manner, the vehicle can then be seized.
- I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Local Beat Team; PC Martin Stannard, PCSO Eleanor Smalley and PCSO John Dyer, Newark and Sherwood District Council Antisocial Behaviour Officer Terry Bailey and The Notts Watch/Newark Area Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator Paul Macey for all their support and guidance over the last 12 months.

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- **Concluding Remarks**

- I would like to finish by thanking my fellow councillors, staff and residents that have made my first year of chairman so memorable. The support I have received has been first class.
- I would also like to thank Cllr Sue Saddington (NCC), Cllr Keith Walker (NCC and NSDC), Cllr Ivor Walker (NSDC) and Cllr Neil Mison (NSDC) for all their advice and guidance to the Parish Council over the last 12 months.

Barry Smith

Chairman Fernwood Parish Council