

Councillor's Report (Crick) July 2021

Planning – Call-in Protocol and Crick Wharf application

The new call-in changes have been amended, making it easier to have an application called in to the planning committee. I learned of these changes soon after I had made a call-in request behalf of the Parish Council regarding the Crick Wharf planning application. Any application can now be called in, provided that a planning reason is given when a ward Councillor makes the request. The call-in must be made within 25 days of the consultation period for the application starting (the latest date on the letters/site notices).

Another amendment is that any “major” application will also automatically go to the planning committee. “Major” includes an application that is for more than 10 properties and the case officer for the Crick Wharf development of 15 holiday lets has confirmed that this application will be considered by the Committee. More information is being sought from the Applicant, so the application is not now likely to go before Committee until September/October.

It's most regrettable that so much confusion and concern has been caused by the changes and I am chasing WNC to give parish councils a proper briefing on the amended arrangements. This month's Daventry planning committee meeting was cancelled for lack of business. On enquiring as to the reason I was told that it was too early to say whether the call-in changes were the cause (i.e. planning officers were making all the decisions). At least local democracy can now have a louder voice when more planning applications should in future be determined by elected representatives.

Meeting of the Full Council 15th July

As you may remember from an earlier report, the first WNC Full Council meeting in May was held at colossal expense at Franklins Gardens. The apparent reason was that no council owned building was large enough to house all 93 councillors, yet yesterday they all fitted in to One Angel Square in Northampton and were socially distanced, with plenty of room to spare. I shall be pursuing why this council venue was not chosen for the first meeting and £8360 of public money was spent on hiring a private venue unnecessarily.

If you are interested in seeing the whole Agenda and Motions put forward here is the link:

[Agenda frontsheet 15th-Jul-2021 18.00 Council.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Some highlights from the Meeting are:

1. The approval of £1M from the Council's general fund to contribute to the Integrated Care Across Northamptonshire programme. This programme, aimed at improving the quality of care for frail residents in the community affects the entire health and care sector. The Council's contribution should enable Adult Social Care and Health to be further integrated and result in savings, as, for example, costs of care post-discharge should decrease as should the number of people requiring Residential or Nursing Homes.

2. A Motion to review all Council services to ensure individuals without internet access are not discriminated against was passed. This was proposed by a Liberal Democrat colleague and fellow

ward councillor Cllr Alan Chantler spoke in support. As well as addressing the alternatives to online form filling, which is obviously not an option to non-internet users, it is hoped that this review will also lead to improvement in telephone access to WNC. I shall be visiting Customer Services at the Daventry office and look forward to finding out how the calls etc are handled and to relaying my concern and the difficulties of navigating the telephone system.

3. A Motion to reaffirm the Council's commitment to the climate emergency was passed. Regrettably, a LibDem amendment to give substance to this bland undertaking by including key performance indicators to measure delivery and by signing the Council up to the UK100 Net Zero Pledge was voted down. So more time is lost in an "emergency"! The Council will however be investigating whether to sign up to the UK100 Pledge (as numerous local authorities have already done) and confirmed that a climate conference is going to be held.

4. A Labour Motion proposed that the Council commits to being a Living Wage Employer. The Living Wage is based on the cost of living and voluntarily paid by over 7,000 employers. In Northamptonshire the Living Wage is £9.50 p/h. The arguments are compelling – low pay is the leading cause of poverty and one million people working in the public sector are paid less than the real Living Wage. Sadly, the Council voted down this Motion and lost an opportunity to show leadership on tackling low pay and demonstrate its commitment to an Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Covid Updates

The Daventry Lateral Flow testing centre has now closed and a mobile van is being used instead. It is currently going to be based in Northampton, but will be going to other locations around the county. Below is the link for ordering LF tests.

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

In anticipation of the ill-named "Freedom Day" next Monday I have copied this advice from the Northants Covid Surveillance Report for data up to 4th July. (My apologies if grandmothers and eggs come to mind!)

"Behave in a COVID Safe way around friends, family and your community. There has been a 134% increase in cases in Northamptonshire. Now and beyond 19th July the following sensible behaviours will be recommended by the government: Getting both doses of the vaccine, testing twice weekly, meeting in well-ventilated areas where possible such as outdoors or indoors with windows open, wearing a face covering where you come into contact with people you don't normally meet in enclosed and crowded spaces, washing your hands with soap and water or using hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day, covering your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze, staying at home if unwell to reduce the risk of passing on other illnesses onto friends/family/colleagues and others in your community, and considering individual risks, such as clinical vulnerabilities and vaccination status when mixing."

[COVID - 19 Surveillance Report data to 04 July \(northamptonshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/covid-19-surveillance-report-data-to-04-july)

Cllr Rosie Humphreys

16th July 2021