Far Cotton Residents Association.
Minutes of Meeting 5th February 2019
Location: The Far Cotton Rec Centre

Chairman
Colin Wood
Vice Chairman
Susannah Wootton
Secretary
Sandra Stokes
Treasurer
Jackie Botrill
Minutes Secretary
Apologies

Attendees:
Jacqueline Abbott
Georgina Gill
Tony Kings
G Rosario
Chris Brinklow
Nicola Gregory
Frances McCoach
Daniel Soan
Margaret Bryan
Diane Higgs
Angela McNeil
J Seamark
Liz Coleman
Rod Higgs
Antonella Mitchell
Richard Short
Sandra Coles
P Hook
R Morrison
Ron Tarry
Josephine Cooper
David Huffadine Smith
P Mumford
John Thompson-Pettit
Rob Cuthbertson
Barbara Issac
Fiona Parks
Neil Welch
Roy Darlow
George Karayannis
Keith Powell
Dee Whitehouse
Julie Davenport Cllr
Dorothy Kings
Emma Roberts Cllr

Apologies:
Sandra Alderman
Russ Hickman
Mark Stokes
Maxine Bannard
Sarah Judith Gravett
Johnny Thompson
Terry Cooper
Helen King
Catherine Thompson
Alan Earle
Chris King
Denise Underwood
Ron Fitzhugh
Arthur Newbury
Graham Walker

The Chairman opened the Meeting and reminded the residents that the meeting is being recorded. Also be Polite & Courteous at all times.

Last Month’s Minutes 8th January 2019.

The Chairman opened by seeking approval of the Meeting Minutes of 8th January.

Updates on what has been done from those minutes are as follows:
- The New Facebook Group Page is being well supported and we now have over 140 new members. Whilst we also have the open Facebook page running alongside it.... please remember that comments on the open group are visible to the general Public.
- Fly Tipping I have posted on both Groups a link on the NBC website to get the App, whereby you can report incidents using your Phone yourself.
- The rubbish in the area of Rothersthorpe Road and the private land issue remains unresolved and is ongoing. Update Angela McNeil (The Warden)
- It is too early to know if the NBC will have a budget for dealing with “Rats”
- The FCRA missed the deadline to oppose the 2 x Alcohol licences on St Leonard’s Road.
- The New Lights are up on Southbridge thank you for Jill for taking the photos.
- Request for signs saying “The River Nene” perhaps Julie Davenport could update us on this?
- There has been no “Cuppa with a Coppa” lately but I expect the police have been too busy.
- Lastly (Item 6 on the Agenda) there will be an update on The Queen Eleanor Cross. Following the Delapre Park Management Committee by Dee Whitehouse.

The Chairman sought approval of the Meeting notes of 8th January 2019.
All Approved.

**Police Report by Colin Wood Chairman – Police unable to Attend**

The crime report for the month of January is as follows:

- Theft From Motor Vehicle – 26 (13 of these had been parked insecure, the rest were mostly smashed windows)
- Theft of Motor Vehicle – 4 (1 linked to burglary at the same time)
- Burglary Dwelling – 20 (6 house breaks 5 were insecure, no entry gained and 12 were shed breaks)
- Burglary Non Dwelling – 2

Notes:

Most of these crimes are happening overnight and the continual theme is houses/ cars being left insecure. The Police encourage residents to make sure they lock their house/car doors even when at home. Most of the car crime that has happened, small amounts of change have been taken or things left on show.
Please encourage anyone that are having issues that are relevant to the police to call in. 101 for a non-emergency or 999 if it is an emergency or they can report the matter on line.

**Warden Report – Angela McNeil**

Angela informed that the work in St Leonards Road continues fixed penalties are being issued and hopefully you will notice a difference down there alongside Ray from Veolia. Gathering evidence and removing all the rubbish that was left out also thanks to the community for reporting.

- Lots of CPW have been issued.
- Section 46 issued with evidence that has been given.
- Fixed Penalties issued.
- Top of Rothersthorpe Road issue (Land with no owner) they are trying to clear all the rubbish in one go. Meanwhile there are trying to get the people who built the housing at Ringway Terrace to take responsibility. There exists a little piece of legislation to say that they should be responsible for adjacent land, however this may take a little while to figure it all out.
- There has been a couple of Joint working Projects with Licensing, basically through finding Fly Tipping and doing a section 34 (which is a duty of care waste on Commercial premises) they have actually found some things wrong with their licensing and actual people working or running the shop who should not be there who have had the licences revoked. All of this is made possible by people reporting in. Some of this is going in front of the licensing panel in regard to some premises in Far Cotton.
- Residents were encouraged to keep reporting!
- In regard to the House on Towcester Road the landlord asked the tenants to remove the rubbish which they did and Fly tipped on the Rec. After talking to Angela the Landlord removed the Fly tip rubbish on the REC and from the front of the property at his expense and has given the Tenants “Notice to quit”. As a result the Tenants ended up with fixed penalties & CPW’s also the Landlord has charged them for the removal of the rubbish – ALL MADE POSSIBLE BY PEOPLE REPORTING.

Questions raised:

Q. Car Dumping all over the place.
A. Unless the vehicles are out of tax they cannot remove them, however if they are out of Tax they will be removed after 2 months and a day.

Q. In regard to the piece of Land between Ransome Road and Southfield Avenue
A. Julie Davenport stated that it is going to be developed but it has not yet gone to planning.
Q. Also asked, rubbish dumped over the bridge into the old railway yard. Old Towcester Road.

A. Angela said she will check to see if it falls under her area. There is a possibility that the rubbish there was collected by the Inland Waterways Association after a recent clear up of Lock 17.


Leaflets were made available.

- Residents/streets identified on the leaflet will if they are on bag collections receive clear bags.
- After either the 1st day or the 2nd Week the old recycling boxes will be collected.
- Residents on this trial will always remain on it indefinitely. If it proves successful it will be rolled out over the whole borough.

It was acknowledge the great work of John Bright who has worked extremely hard on this scheme alongside the Borough Council for over a year to bring this to fruition. It was also stated that Veolia are “Doing a Great Job” and that this would be communicated back to the people on the “Ground”.

Opened to Questions:

Q. Do Idverde manage the contract.

A. It is a Partnership between Veolia & Idverde but always come to Veolia in the first instance.

Q. Will the situation change for Garden waste?

A. No this will remain the same for the foreseeable future.

Note: People who live in Flats if they are not in will receive leaflets through their doors. Also no other bags (if they are not clear sacks) will be accepted.

Q. Since the old contract finished people have not received the Green waste collection bags?

A. These will be delivered starting in a week.

Other issues raised for Veolia, Blocked drains from leaves and tree cutting, branches falling from trees creating a hazard. It was also pointed out that a lot of the leaf debris is coming from Pleydell Road with Delapre Crescent Road being cleared of Leaf debris in the autumn with the majority of leaves cleared in September. However Pleydell Road is neglected although most trees are cut back in September. The Pleydell Road Large Oak tree does not fall until December causing the leaves to blow into Delapre Crescent Road. That leaf debris
still remains an issue and is still not cleared. One deep cleanse does not seem sufficient. Veolia promised to investigate and added that street cleaning is currently being reviewed. Request also for bags for the Far Cotton Litter Pickers.

Nicola Gregwood (Veolia) announced the imminent launch of “The Street Champion scheme” more information will follow.

**Queen Eleanor Cross update – Dee Whitehouse.**

A brief update on the work by the Delapre Park Management Committee.

- The setting up of The Green infrastructure plan. Before work starts next April.
- Alan Earle Chair DPMC is writing a business plan bringing all the projects together, more info to follow in March.
- The new Dog pooh bin which is to be sited by the steps by the bunding has been approved but not yet done.
- Issue of suitability in regard to the paths around the lakes for people with disabilities this is ongoing. Further the entrance to the Abbey is unsuitable for mobility scooters. This is being planned for and will happen.
- The positioning of the Bus Stop on London Road with the entrance to the Abbey is an accident waiting to happen talks are ongoing.
- The Wild meadow “Cut” timings are wrong & repositioning of the Oak trees which need to be placed elsewhere.
- Work is also being done to the overflow car park.

**Eleanor Cross**

- The Tender period closed on the 23rd Jan 2019 NBC currently evaluating.
- Once the contractor is appointed there are a number of issues to be addressed.
- Work is due to commence in April starting with scaffolding.
- The Project will be managed by a specialist team.
- The Structural Engineer advises that as work is imminent temporary measures are not necessary in the interim.
- The Structural Engineer was of the opinion that the outward lean was a result of Rust expansion of the inbuilt ironwork and not the result of horizontal thrust as previously reported.

**Temporary Protection pending repairs.**

- Scaffolding may draw attention/unauthorised access to the monument. Issues of Insurance and the dismantling and rebuilding of scaffolding adding to the costs. It would also be unlikely to meet the requirements of the appointed contractor.
- Wrapping the monument could attract unwanted attention and become an eyesore.
- Wrapping would require straps which could damage the carving & Friable material.
The wrapping would be likely to trap moisture which could freeze thaw. The monument should be allowed to breathe.

The wrapping could act like a sail in the wind this could create strain on the carving & rub against friable material this and other pressures & stresses could cause more damage to the monument.

Hazards to traffic presents issues on the London Road and needs to be considered.

No cars will be able to park on London Road and the old wood yard is being used as a car park.

**HMO Action Group Update - John Bright**

- 94 St Leonards further application for 3 occupants.
- 144 Southampton Road for 4 occupiers refused by NBC last August a further application for 3 occupiers has been passed. However he is appealing that decision against 4 occupiers.
- New Application -39 Thurlestone Road – Application for 4 Occupiers. To make comments for or against Friday the 15th Feb.
- New Application - 144 London Road – Existing HMO applying to increase the occupancy. Closing Date for comments Wednesday the 20th Feb.

**Far Cotton Litter pickers will be Saturday 23rd February starts at 13:00 p.m. outside the Golden Horse.**

A resident raised questions into the state of St Leonard’s Road. It was pointed out that they would need to raise the issues they have with NBC and Veolia also to have a further discussion with Angela The Warden during the Break.

Meeting paused at 20:03 p.m. for coffee.

Meeting reconvened 20:15 p.m.

The Chairman reminded everyone that if anyone wanted to speak at this meeting that they respect the views of other people here as everyone as the right to a say and those that were not present at the start of the meeting that this meeting is being recorded.

**Flood Management Team – Phil Jones NBC, representives of NCC, Richard Jones DSA, Highways & Enviroment Agency.**

Phil Jones explained that part of the NBC role is to undertake Flood investigations whereby there has been significant flooding of which they have completed for St Leonard’s Road. It was pointed out that all the key parties are present to answer any questions and concerns.

- **Richard Jones DSA Civil Engineer** & his colleagues compiled the report into the flooding in May 2018. Acknowledge the devastation Flooding brings to the residents, properties & lives and the fear & frustration this brings. He explained that
this type of rainfall/flooding is usually in rural areas, which is run off from agricultural land with generally around 15 – 25 mm of rain over 6 hours. The Rainfall affecting Northampton last May with 64 mm of rain falling within 1 - 2 Hours. It was an unprecedented storm, drainage systems were not designed to cope and unfortunately the expected result is flooding. St Leonard’s Road sits in a “Bowl” at the base of the hill the runoff from the entire area from around 1 mile away Mereway would have contributed to the flow of water running down to St Leonard’s Road. It is runoff from roads, driveways, roofs and car parks as well as the Far Cotton Park as well allotments, cemetery. All of that water flowing downhill. There were other areas of Northampton for example New Duston, Standens Barn that were also impacted in the same way. Further afield others areas affected Milton Keynes; West Midlands were also badly affected too. Recommendations in their report are spread between local authorities most of which are here at this meeting on how they can work with property owners & the community to increase the general knowledge of flood risk and how to be prepared for it. There is unlikely to be one single item of work that can safeguard against flooding happening again under the same amount of rainfall normally reducing flood risk is the combination of various measures across the wider catchment as well as individual properties. Going forward we need to look at opportunities to hold or divert over the 1 mile area between Mereway & St Leonard’s Road this could be combined with measures at individual properties & having definite plans in place in what individuals & groups can do in an emergency. The report holds a wealth of information and links to the flood toolkit more information can be found on the NCC flooding website. People affected are encouraged to look at this information in a lot of detail.

**Leon Jolly Head of Highways Operational** states he was intimately involved in response shortly after the flooding in fact was based at Delapre community rooms which is where they setup the response centre. He also went to the FCRA meeting directly after the flooding. Summary of what has been done since and what they are still planning to do. They broke up their response into two sections. The initial response they set up a 6 day time period where they brought in Highway inspectors, Highways community liaison officers who were based in Delapre Community Rooms and team after team repairing carriageways defects caused by the flooding. Footways, Manholes and ironwork that had been just blown away by the storm in fact they could even find some of the ironwork that is how far it had gone. A lot of time was spent cleaning silt & debris rubbish from bins that was clogging drains also working with Anglian water to clean up the main lines and went systematically from Road to Road to clean up the emergency response. They then sat down to outline the medium term objectives for the area a site manager was appointed just for your area for 2 months. 2 x Gulley emptiers and a high pressure jetter, a civils team also a traffic
management team and went by street one of the main obstacles was parked cars, a particular challenge to Gully emptying which proved difficult without a pre plan to move every vehicle. Whilst completing this they found jammed & cracked lids the occasional defects, blocked outlet pipes. L.J. explained how a gulley pot works is that it is designed to catch silt, debris & litter so that the pipe at the top remains free to take surface water to the carrier drain. One particular problem is street litter. What they have been trying to do is work with NBC to increase litter picking, street sweeping. Because there is an annual cleanse in this area and if we get litter, rubbish in the gulley pot itself will fill very quickly causing “Blocks ups”. A lot of work in the background is trying to improve that scenario. The Civil’s team are working to repair any defects. At this stage unless it is an enforcement or regulation issue, they have repaired every single defect, that they have emptied all the gulleys. If anyone believes that they have not been contacted (Spent 6 Weeks) ensuring every query went to the right department you should have everything answered or should have had a response if you do not feel you had an adequate answer he L.J. will stay after the meeting to talk to them again. L.J. stated that a huge amount of resources was committed to try to make the area fit for purpose after the storm event. L.J. stated that there was to be a review into the Gulley maintenance program in the next financial year and there will be an update after April. phil jones NCC Floodwater Team explained the next steps the investigation is factual it is the report that we get.

- Designed engineer solutions whether that be increasing capacity, property level protection. How that works the NCC look for a scheme or design a scheme, working with the community to see what looks the best. The NCC uses a calculator to get funding through the environment agency which is called a “Granted Aid Scheme”. P.J. stated at this stage they do not know what the scheme will look like what aid or funding may be available. They do not want to promise anything until they know what that is! Also pointed out that this not a short term project. The funding works in 6 year cycles at present we are at final 2 years now. In the shorter term some of community recommendations come in such as The Pathfinder 2 project a funding scheme that provides support, tools & a small amount of funding aimed at putting into place Flood Wardens, community emergency plans and bringing together a flood action group.

opened to questions.

Q. Some drains are too high up for the water to drain into?
A. Report to Street Doctor if the fall is not right they will deal with it L.J.

Q. If we have the same event this year there is nothing to stop that from flooding again there is nowhere for water to go even if the drains are emptied and clear. That amount of water is still going to flood the properties, because they have built on all the flood plains. Where do we stand on Insurance?
A. P.J. there is a aspect Insurance called flood RE scheme brought in the 2-3 years ago that helps property owners get affordable insurance for flooding most of the insurance companies would have signed up to that scheme. It is open to anyone who lives in high flood risk area. There is either a link on the NCC Flood toolkit website or Google Flood RE. Climate change increases the risk and of it happening again this was a one in 200 year event. That is where that multitude approach is, whereby we they can provide the support for communities to help themselves such as emergency plans, properties level protection.

Q. A Resident from Stephenson Street who was flooded (Council Let) still has damp 6 months on?

A. L.J. recalls the case states the team came down to see them. They checked the gulley & drainage he believes that the problem with this property is “Run Off” from a private bit of land. He will talk to the enforcement team to find out where they are with that because they were investigating it. You can prevent landowners from allowing “Water Run Off” from their properties into yours? Will speak to affected resident after the meeting.

Q. Cllr Julie Davenport said she believes what they are saying that the report is independent, however it is very difficult for the majority of people to believe the report without any solid facts i.e. That if the drains were all unblocked that we will still have been flooded but the question is do you know how many drains were blocked, so that you can make that assessment, and why are we still building in this area? We are having a new development at Lancaster Way with Ransome Road also being developed if the drains cannot cope now what on earth is going to happen when they are built?

A. As far as the road building is concerned from most of the catchment the information got from Highways that at least 70 to 80% where clear when they were inspected. (There was an Emphatic NO from the residents) L.J. asked to qualify that: gulley pot full of silt but 70% of outlet pipes at the top were free & running that was reported from the inspection in 2017.

Q. One resident states they themselves attempted to clear drains that were filled with rubbish?

R. L.J. explained that the Gulley pot will fill with Silt, Rubbish etc. That it was they were designed to do and the key thing to whether a gully is working or not is that little pipe at the top is running free. It is not whether the pot is full or rubbish.

Q. When the Gully pot is full to the grate there is no way that can be running free that was the situation in a large number of gulley’s along St Leonard’s Road on the night of the flood. The environment agency (Not there job) went along and cleared some of the gulley’s and as soon as they cleared them the water levels from the flood water raced away. Within minutes houses that had been previously under a foot of water were clear. J.D. How do we know that it was 80% free, where is the scientific proof?
A. L.J. There are photographs what the teams do when they clear a gulley. They have GPS data when they visit a gulley, they say whether they can do it or not and what the condition of the gulley is. He has all that data and the teams when they visit each gulley say whether the outlet pipe was running whether they could get to it and whether the gulley’s were full. He admitted there were full gulley’s that is not in dispute. L.J. believed in the data that was collected that happened before the flooding event it’s all recorded at that time that 70% of the outlet pipes were running free at that time. Accepts that 30% were blocked to the grate.

Q. What about new developments?
A. P.J. In terms of any new development that is a responsibility that sits with our Team. They have local standards in place so any new development over 10 houses or one hectare. They are a statutory consultee team. Developers have to “hold all the water” on site then discharge it at the rate the land would have originally discharge it. So for example Green Rate is about 5 metres a second. They have to model & design a drainage scheme, we see the model drainage scheme and run it through various models and if it meets what it meeting then it will discharge at that rate. Essentially it is not going to increase anything that was not already there.

Q. If our drainage cannot cope with all that rain, then we will get more because of Climate change?
A. Daniel Soan explains that they put storage tanks in the ground, store that water up and when the rain stops they release at the normal rate.

Q. A resident who lives further up Towcester Road was on holiday and was flooded she did not believe that flooding to be a direct result but an unfinished development to the rear of her property planned for 120 homes contributed. Asked for someone to come out so she could show & explain the situation. Also that there is at least 11 wells bulldozed in. There are other wells left behind on the site that is going to be developed and would like to know what is going to happen to them. The problem with flooding was different to St Leonard’s Road and one week later it was like “Niagara Falls” into the garden. It was not smelling like foul water but was clear water. Asked for more joined up thinking into the issues?
A. P.J. States they are not saying that drains were the major issue on all of these flooding’s. This investigation was to look at the issues in the St Leonard’s Road area. Appreciates that other areas that have other issues will report that back and other investigations are going on. Promised to get back to her.

Q. A resident in a bungalow at the top of the hill said that in over 100 years that the family owned property had never been flooded, why can the drainage system on St Leonard’s Road not be improved in order to deal with the problem?
A. L.J. said that his team and the NCC are looking at the moment to see what can be achieved it is a very “difficult site” as to what you can get into the ground and is ongoing.

Q. One resident claims there is a drain outside the Betting shop only witnessed being cleaned twice in 12 years?

A. L.J. explained that it is particularly difficult for them because of the issue with parked cars. That they always try to combine works where possible. Due to the costs of bringing in traffic management & enforcement to move vehicles and close the road on its own is quite significant. They always try to combine schemes such as the micro asphalt programme and changing those gulleys’s was just around the corner and they were planning to do it all together and move all the cars but the timing was just terrible.

Due to the shortage of time the Chairman acknowledge that a lot of people still have questions to ask here but due to the shortness of time tried to close the Agenda Item.

The Chairman believed that this was much bigger problem here.

The FCRA have signed up to the Pathfinder 2 project to see if we can help make the community more resilient. Suggests another form of action group.

A resident living in the St Leonard’s Road insisted that he be allowed to speak and that he felt we had not spoken to anyone from St Leonard’s Road and that he had spoken to the Chairman to discuss his property on St Leonard’s Road. That he had been invited by the council today and that was meant to be a flood meeting. The Chairman pointed out that this was FCRA Meeting for the residents whereby we try to deal with as many issues that happen in the community. Everyone who attends has issues they want to raise and we try to address those issues. All the work done by the committee is done voluntarily. The Chairman noted that he could see that he is aggrieved that you have been flooded before and that you are in St Leonard’s Road.

The resident insisted on being heard stating that his was one of the worst affected properties. The only thing he wanted to make clear and he could not understand (That he had the Chronicle come out & he was actually in the paper) was that the silt in the drains was that bad that they stood a broom up in the drain and also discussed with you (Chairman) about the drain at Asda that had been leaking for about 2 years prior. What he could not understand is logically there has been no focus on build up to the area the drain at Asda that is consistently leaking & the state of the drains in St Leonard’s Road, that he had also been to Hunsbury where there are quite a few drains that are full of silt so it does not seem to be just constrained to just Far Cotton area and what he was confused about, that the report especially was the lack of empathy and focus with the events leading up to the floods which he believed had a devastating effect on the properties surrounding. Also wanted to say that the response time from the Police for him had not been adequate it took
24 hours to turn up. That if the Police were blocking each end of the road his property and others would not have been flooded. When they were coming down the road Van’s and Lorries and kids on bikes it was creating a wave effect which then was seeping into the property he states he had to hang out of the window and shout at the top of his voice until the fire engines turned up 3 hour later it came to a head when a Carlsberg Lorry came down the road and residents had to take action. To read in the report that there was no kind of focus on that for him felt disingenuous and that is why he is here today.

The Chairman said that his comments were noted.

**Any Other Business**

- A Community Governance review on the back of the talk given by Cllr Phil Larratt into whether a Parish or Community Council would be suitable for Far Cotton & Delapre we are now going to take that forward and setup a group of residents that would be interested and take that forward with the NBC. If anyone would like to take part in this contact either Daniel Soan or the FCRA.
- Lights on the Hard Standing Football on the REC Flood lights are staying on up to Midnight.
- Chairman proposed for The Sue Barnard Epilepsy as the charity funded this year. Proposed by Daniel Soan Seconded By Julie Davenport.
- The sign “River Nene” wanted it on the bridge which is Highways who won’t pay for it so is it something we could do as a community to pay for it? Then on the bottom of the sign we could have donated by Far Cotton Residents. Leon Jolly offered to make up the sign.

**Raffle**

**Meeting closed 21:05 p.m.**