

**Notes from North Walsham Town & Parish Council  
Area Forum  
Held at North Walsham Community Centre  
Tuesday 7 July 2009 at 7:00 pm**

**Present:**

David Spencer	- Antingham Parish council
David show	- Colby Parish council
Diana Clarke	- Norfolk County Council
Tia Gadsden	- North Walsham Town Council
Anne Rose	- North Walsham Parish Council
Ellen Grover	- North Walsham Parish Council
Norman Burton	- Trunch Parish Council
Jo Gardner	- Worstead & Tunstead Parish Council
Pat Ford	- North Norfolk District Council
Virginia Gay	- North Norfolk District Council
Philip Burton	- North Norfolk District Council
Barbara McGoun	- North Norfolk District Council
Sarita Presland	- Norfolk ALC
Sheila Oxtoby	- North Norfolk District Council
Lynda McElligott	- North Norfolk District Council
Maureen Clarke	- North Norfolk District Council
Julie Souter	- North Norfolk District Council
Sam	- North Norfolk Youth Voice
jacob	- North Norfolk Youth Voice
Stuart	- North Norfolk Youth Voice
Sammi	- North Norfolk Youth Voice
Tara	- North Norfolk Youth Voice
Katie	- North Norfolk Youth Voice

**Apologies:**

Jacqueline Belson	- North Walsham Town Council
Jane Shulver	- North Walsham Parish council

## **North Norfolk Youth Voice**

Sheila opened the meeting by introducing herself to the attendees along Virginia Gay Leader of the Council and Philip Burton - Chief Executive who were also in the audience.

The evening started off with a slide presentation from North Norfolk Youth Voice. Following this presentation there were a series of questions:

Norman Burton from Trunch Parish Council said that they had tried on previous occasions to include the youth from Trunch into the Parish Council meetings. There was fifteen minutes set aside at the beginning of each meeting held monthly, except August where members of the public have an opportunity to voice their opinion to the Parish Council. However, to date they had not been taken up on this offer.

Jacob responded that whilst the youth should not be treated differently they did have different needs – it should always be a consideration that there might be a number of reasons that they could not attend, not just the fact that they couldn't be bothered, these could be as follows:

- The wrong time of day – clash with youth club, school commitments etc.,
- Transport – being able to get to and from the meetings may be an issue.
- How the meeting is run, meetings can appear intimidating – use of acronyms, lengthy terminology.

NNYV were asked if their meetings were publicised.

It was confirmed these took place every other Thursday at Merchants Place in Cromer. The group is still in its very early days only just approaching their first birthday. It has been publicised through You Must Be Joking, Outlook and on the North Norfolk District Council web site.

The group was set up to give the decision makers and Councillors opportunity to relate to young people through these members.

The group were asked how many members they had.

Jacob confirmed there were fifteen full time members at present but it was still very early days of the group being formed.

Chris Hall praised NNYV on their presentation and said that he would like to invite them to two meetings per year at North Walsham Town Council.

Jacob suggested that he contacts Julie to arrange details.

Barbara McGoun introduced herself as the Youth Champion for the District Council and re-iterated what Chris Hall had said.

Discussion then turned to the impression that people had regarding the youth of today. Jacob said the under 16's statistically had less asbo's as opposed to the over 60's with a significant number more – therefore, you should be far more wary of “granny” than the “hoodies”.

The Parish and Town Councils were encouraged to work with the youth in their area, there is funding available if the youth are engaged.

A question was raised if the NNYV would be prepared to visit a youth club with an age range of 9 – 16?

Jacob confirmed they would be more than happy to attend.

Jacob was asked if members of NNYV received agenda's from the parishes they lived in, as this would also be their opportunity to feed anything into their local area.

At present they do not, but agreed it was an excellent idea and suggested these could come through Julie to be passed on to them at their fortnightly meetings.

### **LGR Update**

Sheila gave the group a brief summary of the timetable to date. Initially the process had started in September 2007, but in earnest began in March 2008. She confirmed that there had not been a huge amount spent in respect of what some Council's had – approximately £30,000 to date. It was felt that the Boundary Committee had not sufficiently consulted with the local residents of Norfolk and this had been supported by a judicial review.

No financial business case, analysis or value for money had been prepared in respect of either of the submissions for the wedge or the doughnut. The original recommendation was due to go to the Secretary of State in December 2008, then February 2009 and now, due to the judicial review the date has been pushed back even further. Finally the response was submitted by 14 May 2009, and the Boundary Committee are due to put their recommendation to the Secretary of State by the 15 July 2009. However, this is unlikely to go before parliament until October due to the summer recess.

Sheila outlined the set up costs involved with both proposals being introduced and the savings that were suggested would be made over a four year period.

Sheila explained that NNDC along with four other local Council's had commissioned an Ipsos Mori telephone questionnaire to gauge the public's support for either the doughnut, wedge or the status quo.

Norfolk Local Government Association had passed the motion the week before last to support three tier Government and promote joint working.

Virginia urged everyone that it was still not too late and if they wished to express an opinion this could be done via the Boundary Committee website.

It is unlikely now that the bill could be implemented until April 2011, and if a change of government took place prior to the bill being laid before parliament the decision could be reversed.

The question was raised who is the current Secretary of State in the light of Hazel Blears resignation – John Denham.

Norman Burton of Trunch Parish Council praised NNDC, he wished to compliment them on the services which they carried out and feared that if unitary were introduced this would be detrimental to local rural and coastal areas – he thought there was a real risk of being sucked into “urban areas” like Great Yarmouth and Thetford.

David Spencer from Antingham Parish Council however, thought that unitary could present a whole new set of opportunities for the local parish and town councils giving them much more powers regarding how spending is carried out locally. Sheila confirmed that at no point had NNDC said that unitary was not a good opportunity, it was just the way the process had been carried out by the Boundary Committee which was in dispute. A dialogue then took place of what Mr Spencer’s views and understanding were regarding unitary. Sheila confirmed she was happy to have a discussion regarding this but was aware that time was limited at the area forums.

Sheila said that Cornwall and Northumberland both who had recently gone through the unitary process were being contacted regarding costs, there was no real audit trail so it was difficult to establish figures but it was estimated that costs had at least trebled.

### **Quality Council’s**

A presentation was then carried out by Sarita Presland for the Quality Council’s.

Following the presentation there were some questions. It was established there were currently in Norfolk 39 Quality Councils. The benefits of being a member of the Association were training, legal advice, newsletters, area meetings and clerk bursary training to name just a few.

Achieving quality parish status demonstrates that a council has met certain minimum standards expected from an effective, representative and active Parish Council.

It was questioned whether to obtain quality council status costs a lot of money? Devolution of services from principle authorities’ can mean that money can be spent

how the parish and town councils wish on providing the devolved function. Another alternative is for partnership working and clustering with other Councils, economics of scale but dependant on services.

The existing quality councils have not increased their precepts – think this needs to be deleted as they probably have!! Sarita was asked what the advantage to obtaining quality council status was. Sarita pointed out that when NCC had required information, it was, in many instances, the quality councils that they decided to involve as a first point of contact.

### **The Way Forward**

The point was raised that it was a shame that the only way the community seemed to engage with the Parish Council's was if there was a contentious issue on the agenda.

Maureen suggested that perhaps Parish Councils looked at how they presented their meetings – fun days, street art. She also introduced the “Branching out in your Community” – this is a pilot project being run in Holt and Ashmanhaugh to encourage groups of people who ordinarily wouldn't stand for election to get involved. NNDC has a small budget for the ideas which the councils decide to implement. There are also other funding bodies available.

### **Any Other Business**

The point was raised that the buses are no longer run for the passengers!

Concern was raised that the VHT based in North Walsham is inaccessible by foot! Sheila confirmed that discussions were ongoing to have a one stop shop based in the town.

Councillor Gloria Lisher was appointed as Champion Member for Parish and Town Councils and would develop relationships with Councils and act as a liaison point.



**If you need these minutes in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Supporting Communities Team on 01263 516346 or email: [dina.croft@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:dina.croft@north-norfolk.gov.uk), and we will do our best to help.**