

NETTLEHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, 23rd April 2018

District Councillor's Report

Since the last meeting of Nettleham Parish Council I have participated in interviews for up to two vacancies on the District Council's **Independent Remuneration Panel** on Tuesday, 27th March and Monday 16th April. These are now concluded and an announcement on these appointments will be forthcoming soon.

I attended the Chairmen's Briefing for the **Governance & Audit Committee** on Wednesday, 4th April prior to the meeting of that committee on Tuesday, 17th April. It was very pleasing to have two members of the public present, one of whom addressed the committee; of particular relevance to Nettleham Parish Council was discussions regarding the **scheme of delegation related to planning** (specifically member referrals to the planning committee). Several members had expressed concerns about how the system was operating. There were fourteen call-in requests (for applications to be determined at Planning Committee and not issued under delegated powers) that were made to the planning team between January 2017 and March 2018. During this period the team determined just shy of 1,400 applications therefore call-ins are made on approximately 1% of the applications determined by the Council (although district councillors do make representations on many more than this). thirteen call-in requests received were raised with the Chairman of the Planning Committee, including all invalid requests and those presenting little or no planning reasons. The remaining call-in request was not discussed because the referring councillor instructed that the call-in only applied if the application were recommended for approval. The application was refused for planning reasons, and therefore the councillor agreed that the call-in need not stand. In five cases officers queried the call-in reasons with the councillor making the call-in request and discussed their concerns with them. In all five cases there was agreement for the decision to be made under delegated powers. Only five of the call-in requests complied with the district council's constitutional requirements for a call-in request and provided material planning reasons: Of these five requests two went on to be determined at committee, the remaining three were discussed further with the referring councillor and their concerns were addressed sufficiently (including explanation of the role of the committee) so that agreement was reached to issue the decision under delegated powers. Three of the call-in requests only partially complied with the constitutional requirements or contained only part of the justification necessary. Meanwhile, six of the call-in requests contained either: no planning reasons for the call-in, no reference to any relevant policies or were submitted out of time (two). None of the invalid requests went on to be determined at committee (except for one application that required committee approval due to legislative requirements and nature of the development proposed). On balance the Governance & Audit Committee felt that the current arrangements were sufficient, although improvements in communications on these call-ins could be beneficial.

I represented the district council, together with our Executive Director of Resources, Mr. Ian Knowles, on Wednesday, 18th April, at the inaugural **Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Local Audit Quality Forum** in London. This was a very positive event and it will play a key role in supporting and enabling good governance and strong public accountability. The intention of the forum is to encourage collaboration between authorities and other key stakeholders, to share good practice and help drive improvements in the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of audit arrangements and practices in principle local authorities and police bodies in England. Audit quality, efficiency and effectiveness are shared responsibilities: They are key concerns for auditors and their firms, chief finance offices, local government audit committees; regulatory and supervisory bodies; for the Comptroller & Auditor General, the National Audit Office and for government. Moreover, the quality of local audit is of great import to local residents to ensure that they receive assurance about those responsible for spending of public money.

I regret that I have been unable to attend the Parish Council's meeting this evening and the preceding Annual Parish Meeting. Unfortunately, as Chairman of the district council's **Community Awards Panel**, I am attending the awards ceremony. I know that several applications came from Nettleham and regardless of the outcome I

think everyone who is put forward for an award is a star, who do something special, something extra for our communities. I hope to email out further information about local results as soon as I can after the ceremony.

In the coming weeks I expect to attend a meeting of the Planning Committee on Wednesday, 2nd May (webcast live), chair an Association of Public Service Excellence's Strategic Forum on Commercialisation & Professional Public Finance, and attend Annual Council on Monday, 14th May (webcast live); the outcome of which will have a bearing on my committee appointments in the next civic year.

I have the final tranche of £1,000.00 from my Councillors' Initiative Fund which is now available. I have already had a few expressions of interest; from a project to tackle loneliness in our community this Christmas, support for the Nettleham Festive Market and a bid for a refresh of ICT at Nettleham Community Hub. These projects will potentially consume up to 65% (£650) of my remaining monies if successful, so whilst there is still time to apply, people should not wait to do so; as once it's gone it's gone.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Giles McNeill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the name.

Giles McNeill

Working hard for the Nettleham Ward