

MARLINGFORD AND COLTON COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Issue 8, November 2023

OUR WHATSAPP GROUP

One positive aspect of the ongoing traffic chaos through Colton and Marlingford, is that there has been excellent communication between some of our residents, keeping everyone up to date with the situation.

This has been achieved using a WhatsApp community group called "The Village People".

We would like to suggest that there could be a wider usage of this clever tool. If therefore, you would like to be added to the circulation list, please contact John Morse on 07760 557488 or by email to johnmorse.mcpc@outlook.com. He will be pleased to let you know how your name can be added.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

It was agreed at the most recent meeting that, to make attendance at meetings less onerous, and more attractive to potential new councillors, from January 2024 the Parish Council will meet bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Meetings will be held at 7pm in either Colton Village Hall or Marlingford Cricket Club. The January meeting will be held in Colton Village Hall.

WELCOME MARK

Marlingford and Colton Parish Council are pleased to welcome Mark Pfeiffer as a Parish Councillor. Mark, who will, from March 2024, be the primary point of contact for issues in Marlingford, was co-opted at the October meeting and is already getting involved in Parish Council issues. Mark, and all the Councillors, can be contacted through the clerk on the details on page 4. The Parish Council is still looking for new Councillors; there are currently 2 vacancies. We would love to hear from you if you would like to know more.

ROAD DAMAGE AROUND COLTON

As everyone knows, the narrow lanes through Colton (and the surrounding villages) were badly damaged and left inches deep in thick mud following flooding on the A47 over two days which sent thousands of vehicles through our little roads.

John Morse, chairman of Marlingford and Colton PC, got in touch with the authorities to press them for clearing-up and preventive action to minimise the chance of this happening again. With winter coming, and work on the A47 dualling starting - plus the ever-present risk of accidents at the Honingham junction - there is a good chance of a repeat of the event.

John asked five key questions and below is an edited summary of the responses from NCC's Adam Mayo, Highway Engineer South, who is based at Ketteringham. If you wish to see the full response, please contact John. Mr. Mayo is sympathetic to our plight, for what it is worth.

- 1. The roadway is cleared, cleaned and any damage is repaired at the earliest opportunity.**
- 2. Arrangements will be put in place to urgently repair and reinstate verges, hard standing, barriers and walls which have been damaged by the volume of traffic.**

NCC: Roads will be inspected, and repairs actioned as soon as possible (though the wet ground will affect the timing of this). A Contractor has been instructed 'at the earliest opportunity' to send a road sweeper and possibly a digger to clean the road, which will be inspected for damage once clear.

- 3. Erect signage to permanently stop lorries and other large vehicles attempting to use our local, single lane roads.**

NCC: To do this a Traffic Regulation Order is needed. This would require a full consultation process and is likely to be challenged by local businesses/farming. n.b. Mr. Mayo's colleague witnessed, during an inspection, farming activities in the parish continuing to push soil onto the part of the road and causing further verge erosion).

Advisory signage could be an alternative but is non-enforceable. If the Parish wishes to pursue a possible TRO to restrict large/heavy vehicles, Mr. Mayo recommends discussing with your Local Member/s Cllr Margaret Dewsbury and/or Cllr Greg Peck who may consider a potential bid via the Road Safety Community Fund scheme.

- 4. Ensure that the Police, or any other authority, know that the roads through Colton are, and always will be unsuitable for any overflow traffic.**

NCC: Under a blue light situation, Police will understandably focus on the incident itself, mindful not to increase risk of consequential incidents occurring as a result. The County Council regularly engages with the Police and other authorities to discuss issues and we will reiterate the impact of diverted 'trunk' road traffic on unsuitable rural roads. When reviewing planned closures and diversions we would condition the

applicant to suitably sign rural roads to discourage diverted traffic if necessary and by exception temporary close. This isn't our favoured approach (to close roads) unless there is a direct need, and we expect drivers to use the signed diversion route.

This was an emergency giving no opportunity to assess beforehand and National Highways informed us of their closure at 2.08, by such time the damage was done. Human instinct will result in drivers using what they consider the most direct alternative despite signage etc. to advise otherwise. Most satellite navigation systems do the same.

5. Provide us with an assurance that in future, all traffic, affected by issues on the A47, whether by flooding, accidents, or forthcoming construction work, will never be directed through Colton.

NCC: *I'm unable to give assurances regarding works/incidents on the A47 and would recommend this matter be addressed to National Highways. NCC will continue to liaise closely with NH to ensure any 'planned' works on their network give thorough consideration to potential impact on NCC network and appropriate measures are implemented.*

On this issue, the Parish Council do send a representative to the Norwich Western Link / A47 Local Liaison Group, and will raise this issue at the next meeting, to be held in Costessey, on 8th November.

Additional points from Mr. Mayo: *Any landowner who experienced damage to property can pursue a claim against NCC. Go to norfolk.gov.uk and find the business/business services section. It is also distressing to hear individuals were subject to abusive behaviour. I would recommend giving thought to reporting these incidents to the Police.*

The Parish Council will continue its dialogue with Mr. Mayo, next week, and will report back, initially using the "The Village People" WhatsApp Group, any further updates.

Note: As we went to press with this newsletter, NCC contractors were still nowhere to be seen; James Alston and his team from Honingham Thorpe, have had a farm sweeper out to try and help the situation. We are most grateful for their action.

...AND IN MARLINGFORD...

Due to the low-lying nature of the village, Marlingford residents became very concerned about flooding and drainage. Last weekend's heavy rain led to the main access road to the Watton Road via Bow Hill being completely flooded and blocked. The road from Marlingford to Barford was also impassable for a time due to a huge puddle close to the Tiffey bridge.

Furthermore, some of the residents on Bawburgh Road mentioned that the River Yare reached further up their gardens than ever before. An elderly couple quite wisely started filling sandbags!

Going forward, so much depends on how the Estate and Environment Agency manage the gates at Marlingford and Bawburgh Mill. We therefore would encourage all Marlingford residents with concerns about drainage and flooding to attend the November PC Meeting and raise the issues there.

COLTON QUIZ NIGHT

On Saturday 21st October, the Colton Village Hall hosted an excellent quiz night. Eight teams of up to six people braved the muddy roads and soggy weather, and prioritised coming, over the rugby on TV, to compete in this very successful annual event.

We would like to thank our quizmaster, Annette Hudson, for preparing some excellent and varied questions, which must have taken ages to prepare, and for running the evening so effectively. Thanks too to everyone else who helped make the evening such a success.

Regarding the competition results, Sue Rix, who valiantly competed by herself, did very well but alas won the wooden spoon. Modesty forbids me from saying who made up the winning team, but suffice to say, The Mudlarks, as they were called, had a really great time as well. The evening raised £100 for the hall.

CURRY IN FAVOUR

Colton Village Hall's first curry night on September 16th was a tremendous success. More than 40 people joined the fun for an evening of delicious Asian-inspired food, expertly created by Rose Kay. Rose, who with husband Mark has taken over the reins at The Norfolk Lurcher, conjured up a fabulous array of dishes, prepared with the help of a team from the village hall committee. A licenced pop-up bar organised by Mark was a hit and the evening raised more than £200 for hall funds.

COUNTY CAR SCHEME

Following the recent withdrawal of the local Community Car Scheme for Colton and Marlingford residents, you may be interested to learn that the County Council has its own similar scheme across most of Norfolk.

The service is available to adults who:

- Have specific health or social needs but aren't eligible for free transport.
- Are unable to use or access regular public transport.
- Cannot access transportation from family or friends.
- Require transport for essential shopping like food or medication pick-up.
- Receive mobility allowance, including higher or enhanced rates.
- Have experienced a heart attack, stroke, or uncontrolled seizures in the past three months. In this case, they will need to be accompanied by a companion.
- Can get into and out of a vehicle unaided. (Unfortunately, they are unable to take people who travel in wheelchairs.)

Users are welcome to bring a caregiver or assistant for support at appointments or services.

Where can a driver take you?

- Health-related journeys to medical centres such as hospitals, doctors, or health clinics.
- Other medically related appointments and preventative health care. For example, this could include visits to the dentist, optician, physiotherapy, or occupational therapy.
- Day care and respite care.
- Essential shopping (food shop at supermarket).
- Social activities or activities to help with general wellbeing.

Each journey costs 45p per mile (50p per mile if a passenger's wife, husband, partner, carer or chaperone travels with them). The charge includes the mileage the volunteer travels to and from your house.

Please contact Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm) to find out more and reserve your ride. Please give them at least three working days' notice before you travel. For more details, please see: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/public-transport/travel-norfolk-car-scheme>

NEW BUS TIMETABLE

As previously reported, there is a new bus service serving Marlingford and Colton. Some residents have reported that due to traffic delays and other issues, there have been problems in making connections to scheduled services running through Easton. We previously reported to SNDC that some of the proposed connection times were tight and would now be pleased to hear if anybody has been inconvenienced by these new arrangements, which we will pass on to SNDC.

Also, and of note, despite the new bus stop in Colton being moved to the junction of The Street and Norwich Road, a new bus timetable has been affixed to a post by the old stop, by the village hall. Honestly, you couldn't make it up...

Don't forget there continues to be a *First Bus* Flexibus Service. To book a bus, please call 01603 223956.

ZERO HOUR

Marlingford and Colton Parish Council has been approached by Zero Hour and asked if we would consider showing support for the Climate and Ecology Bill, calling for joined-up action that provides an adequate, commensurate response to the emergency of our natural world, our parks, villages and towns, our landscapes and wildlife. The Climate and Ecology bill is due for its second reading on 24th November 2023.

As we represent our parishioners and are non-political, we would like to hear whether you would want the parish council to support this or not.

For more information on the Climate and Ecology bill please visit <https://www.zerohour.uk/>

Please let us know your thoughts to marlingfordandcoltonpc@gmail.com by the 14th November.

COMING UP AT COLTON VILLAGE HALL...

Saturday, December 9th

Join us for a Christmas coffee and cake (or possibly even a mince pie!)

Come and meet the neighbours at the hall for a coffee, tea, and a piece of delicious cake. It's all very relaxed - and any donations of cake/mince pies etc. will be very welcome! There will be a tombola too if you're feeling lucky. From 10am.

Saturday, December 9th

Eyes down - and collect your charity cash!

It's the traditional festive family fun bingo! Eyes down at 7pm for the main event, plus a raffle and refreshments at half-time. From 6.30 the hall will be open for you to collect your Colton Fuel Allotment cash - so you'll even have some spending money.

.. AND AT MARLINGFORD VILLAGE HALL...

On Sunday, 5th November at 6.30pm Marlingford Village Hall will be the venue for the regular Quiz Night. Please join us for a fun evening with teas/coffee and cake available. Feel free to bring your own alcoholic/non-alcoholic drinks. Either come along as a team (up to 4 people) or make up a team on the night. It will be £ 2.50 per person (cash please) with all proceeds going to St Mary's Church Marlingford's, Fabric Fund. "

A NEW BEAT MANAGER



Our most recent Beat Manager, James Smith, has been reassigned. Effective immediately, he has been replaced by PC Andrew Sneddon who, until recently, looked after a beat in Poringland.

Andrew will be responsible for Costessey, Easton, Colton, Marlingford, Barford, Great Melton and Wrampingham, and can be contacted via email: SNTCostessey@norfolk.police.uk

We have already raised the issue of the Police's lack of response to the traffic issues which have occurred in the last few days, which left several of our residents having to direct congested traffic themselves.

We would appreciate your comments on any of the issues raised in this Newsletter. Please contact any of the Parish Council, whose details will be found on the Notice Boards in both villages, or our Clerk, Maria Hutson on 01603 850118, via our website: www.marlingfordandcoltonpc.co.uk or by E-Mail to marlingfordandcoltonpc@gmail.com