DINNINGTON ST. JOHN'S TOWN COUNCIL
Annual Parish Meeting - 7.00pm, Monday 10th April 2017
at The Lyric, Laughton Road, Dinnington

Present:
Cllr D Smith (Chair) plus 12 parishioners, 12 Dinnington Town Councillors, 2 Rotherham Borough Councillors

Along with: A Evans (Clerk), L Warne (Asst Clerk), P Wickson (Retiring Accountant), L Hurt (New Accountant)

1. The Chairman addressed the meeting and welcomed all in attendance.

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting on 11th April 2016 were given for all to read. No requests for amendments were received, so the minutes were agreed as a true record.

3. To consider any matters arising from the minutes - None

4. Chair’s Annual Report 2016/17

The Chair gave the following report to the meeting:

It has been an eventful year since the last Parish meeting. On behalf of the Town Council, I attended a number of meetings at Riverside House, with the government inspector for planning who ultimately decides what type and where new building will take place. I fought the case for saving our green belt and showed the inspector that there are other appropriate sites to build housing in Dinnington.

One great success was arguing the case for keeping the A57 as greenbelt. The inspector agreed that this would take away our rural standing and so he removed it from Rotherham Borough Council’s plan to build an industrial park. The knowledge that our local greenbelt group provided, went a long way towards this success.

Work has started on the new Council offices next door which should be ready in June, providing much needed office space as well as storage space for the Lyric equipment. It will also mean that the people of Dinnington will have easier contact with the Town Councillors.

Some remedial and repair work has also been completed on the Lyric bringing it up to current safety standards and we hope to move forward with the planned new decoration in the next few months.

Also this year, we have had our local police taken away from us and the four PCSOs reduced to two. According to our police commissioner, they have moved into a hub in the resource centre, which is really a cupboard with no real access to our Police from the public. We are all too aware of the results of this and I am sure there will be some lively discussion later on this matter.

In my opinion, the most important thing that has come about in the last year is the setting up of a working group, made up of local people as well as Town Councillors, to put together a Neighbourhood Plan for Dinnington – the first in Rotherham. This plan can help us to choose where new homes, shops, offices and other development should be built as well as having more say in the infrastructure in Dinnington. With the plan in place, we can identify and protect important local spaces. We can also influence what new building look like. It will give us an important say in planning, that we don’t have now.

We will soon be holding a consultation with the people of Dinnington on this, so keep an eye out for our leaflets and posters and come along to give us your ideas and opinions. Once we have completed the Neighbourhood Plan we will be asking you to vote for it.
If you agree with it then we can take control from Rotherham Borough Council and give it back to Dinnington.

Dinnington has been neglected by Rotherham Borough Council for too many years and this Town Council will continue to work for the best possible outcome for our Town.

Thank you for all coming and I look forward to working with you all over the coming year.

5. Question to parishioners: How do the people of Dinnington feel about the Town Council applying to erect ‘Throapham’ signs when approaching Dinnington from Firbeck?

Following various discussions, Dinnington parishioners decided that as the request was from just one Throapham resident and that no requests had been received from other Throapham residents, Dinnington Town Council should not apply to erect signs at this point in time.

6. Discussion: Dinnington Police station (Mr Wells)

Mr Wells opened the discussion about Police presence in Dinnington. There were many contributors to the topic with the main concerns being:

- All Police Officers are stationed in a large station at Maltby, but it would benefit surrounding communities to have their own smaller stations, which with the I.T. technology we have these days, could still be commanded by Maltby.
- Despite the closure of Dinnington Police Station only being a recent event, the Station has not been staffed properly for many years.
- Even though there appears to be enough Police Officers in general, we do not see them on the streets of Dinnington.
- Dinnington Parishioners pay for Police presence in their Council Tax but are not getting value for money
- Youths frequently race the wrong way up roads, posing a danger to themselves and the public, with little fear of being caught as they know the Police will not be around.
- There are far more recorded incidents in Dinnington than there are in Maltby, so Police should be based and patrolling where there are more incidents.
- Dinnington does not seem to have actual Police Officers allocated to the area and the two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) that Dinnington is allocated do not have the powers of arrest that is needed.
- Members of Dinnington Town Council were not invited when the Police ‘Hub’ was opened in the Resource Centre
- MP Kevin Barron said he would contact local Parish Councils regarding Policing, but nothing has been received by Dinnington Council
- Cllr D Smith invited South Yorkshire Police Crime Commissioner Dr Alan Billings to a recent meeting to discuss Policing in Dinnington. Dr Billings did not respond, so he was not expected at the meeting and therefore was not included in the agenda. Dr Billings however did attend the meeting, but as he was not on the agenda, many Dinnington Parishioners did not attend the meeting to ask him questions
- Rotherham Councillors did not seem to be helping with the lack of Policing in the area. Cllr Tweed reassured the meeting that discussions were going on behind the scenes. Cllr Tweed was asked to feed back to Dinnington Council
- Dinnington and the surrounding Parishes only get ‘reactive’ policing. How many bad things have to happen in the area before we get the Policing we need
As a result of the various discussions and concerns, the following decisions and requests were made:

- The current petition to re-open Dinnington Police Station (which will be presented to South Yorkshire Police Chief Constable Stephen Watson) now has over 3300 signatures. The petition will remain open for signatures for as long as it takes and businesses in Dinnington will also be asked to support the petition, as crime affects them just as much.
- Dinnington Town Council will write to Chief Constable Stephen Watson to invite him to a Town Council meeting so Parishioners can attend and ask questions. Dinnington Town Council will copy all other Parish Councils into that invitation so they can support that request.
- Dinnington Town Council will ask other Parish Councils to put the matter of Policing on their own agendas, so Parishioners of those areas can also be heard.
- Dinnington Town Council will write to the Home Secretary in London, as the Home Secretary has overall responsibility for policing levels.
- Anyone can write to the Home Secretary and it was put to the two Rotherham Councillors present at the meeting that they ask all nine Rother Valley South Councillors to write to the Home Secretary to request better policing in the area.

The Chair asked Parishioners if they had any other questions or comments.

Litter
It seems that a lot of the litter problems in Dinnington and surrounding areas are as a result of Veolia trucks sheading their load whilst travelling (like a blizzard of litter)

Parking
Cars park on the pavement outside the old Post Office on Laughton Road. Can Rotherham Traffic Wardens do something about this? The Chair advised that he had already queried this and had been told that Traffic Wardens cannot give a parking ticket and can only take enforcement action if the vehicle is seen driving over the pavement. It was suggested that more bollards are put in place to restrict access.

Swinston Hill Road
Street lights have been replaced but the brackets are missing for the flower hanging baskets. DSJTC to enquire about having these brackets installed.

The meeting finished at 8:05pm with Parishioners being reminded that they are welcome to attend the next Town Council meeting on 8th May 2017, 7pm at the Lyric.