

"Please note that the following is a summary of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 12th of April 2016.

Full minutes of that meeting will be published following the signing of the minutes as a true record by the Chairman at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

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ANNUAL PARISH MEETING April 2016

The Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Ashill was held on Tuesday 12th April 2016 in the Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Mr R Leighton was in the Chair with 8 members of the Council, the Clerk Jean Sangster, Mr Frank Sharpe District Councillor, and 19 members of the public in attendance.

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were taken as read, passed and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

HIGHWAYS – The flooding problem in Swaffham Road had been dealt with and the Church Street pavement is programmed for repair in next two months. It was asked that the large pothole at junction to Green Lane be reported.

PLAY EQUIPMENT – All equipment in good condition and is inspected every month. There has been the addition of 2 new 'Springies' for the tots and recently 3 picnic tables have been sited near the equipment. Also the toddler seats on the old swings have been replaced. Working party looking into equipment for older children.

DEVELOPMENT GOOSE GREEN ALLOTMENT – The query as to ownership of hedge and trees is still being dealt with but Trustees and Council refused to take back ownership of ditch as requested by Mr Bell.

SPEEDWATCH SCHEME – Mrs Lusher reported that the scheme currently has 10 volunteers but 1 has had to take time off due to ill health and another has been on maternity leave. Two more residents have expressed an interest to join. Over last 12 months 166 drivers have been registered and reported at 35mph or more in just 36 sessions. The Scheme has changed in that drivers travelling at 35mph and over are now reported rather than 37mph. Teatime is a prime time for speeding and at the moment this is being focused on. Last week the fastest speeder so far was reported at 60mph coming into the village from Holme Hale. Mrs Lusher thanked her loyal team for their commitment - without them there would be no scheme.

CAR SCHEME - The Clerk reported that there had been nearly the same number of journeys this year but mileage had increased to 14007. Several volunteers have given up this year but have been replaced by new drivers and there is now a total of 25. The DBS checks have recently been carried out with rules being even more stringent than previously and the Clerk informed that Breckland had just handed over the funding of the Scheme to Norfolk Community Foundation to administer although there are no details at present of how this is to work.

The Chairman said that this is a wonderful scheme and we must try our best to keep it working and thanked the volunteer drivers for all their help and Mrs Warne for arranging the journeys. He congratulated those who had taken part in the Gold Assessment Scheme.

LITTER PICK - This was again carried out at beginning of March and had proved a most successful two days with 21 helpers this year. The weather on the second day was awful but members of WI and several other brave souls still came out and carried on regardless. Thanks were expressed to all those who came along to help and at least the village looked clean and tidy for a few days.

COMMUNITY CENTRE - The Committee had continued with Mr Keith Collins as Chairman and the AGM is to held on 14th April this year. He thanked the village for their continued support at events held at the Centre and the contributions from fund raising from Dances and Discos. The roof has now been repaired and a new alarm system fitted. Also the kitchen door has been replaced, new outside lighting and the disabled toilet refurbished thanks to funds raised at Fete, the Parish Council donation and a grant from Lovewell Blake.

RECYCLING BANKS AT COMMUNITY CENTRE - Income to May 2015 was £1059-52. This was an increase on previous year and Parishioners were asked to continue to use the facility as it is a good source of income for the Parish.

CHURCHYARD - The Chairman confirmed that the maintenance will continue to be paid for by 2/3rd's from Parish Council and 1/3 from Trustees with a new maintenance contractor employed for this year.

LYCH GATE - A letter was read from the Parochial Church Council expressing their disappointment with the workmanship of the repairs. The Chairman assured everyone that the Council had done their best to get the contractor to come and inspect this but it wasn't until this week that the Clerk had managed to make contact and he assures that he will visit.

POLICE - PCSO Bailey unable to attend but had recently met with the Clerk and explained that a new system had been installed for listing the crimes and was proving difficult to access. The parking problem outside school was again raised and it was suggested that parents use the lay- byes on Acacia Avenue rather than block the road. Asked to inform PCSO Bailey.

WEBSITE - This is working well and the old website has now been removed but people are still having trouble accessing the site.

CORRESPONDENCE

Email from Anglian Water informing of Pollution Reporting mainly for rivers.

Hotline number is 03457145145..

This led to the new water main through the village being discussed and why Cressingham Road had not been included as the pipe has burst on several occasions.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr Leighton commenced his report by stating that this had been the most 'interesting' year since becoming a Councillor. He welcomed the 3 new Councillors who were elected last May who have all shown their enthusiasm and commitment to the village.

Once again planning issues had been the most contentious and great consideration had been given to compiling a Neighbourhood Plan but following many meetings it was decided that due to new Local Plan not yet being adopted and the time and cost involved, this would not be carried out at present time.

He expressed disappointment in having to report that he and the Council had received regular complaints from one developer in the village and that he had been accused of racism and the Council of always objecting to developer's plans.

He confirmed that the Council and himself are investigating how this matter should be handled but he assured the village that the Council would not be bullied and would continue

to conduct it's business in an open and honest way to try and achieve what they believe is the best outcome for Ashill.

He then went on to offer thanks especially to the Clerk who goes above and beyond her duties, attending meetings throughout the County to ensure the Council is run correctly and efficiently adding many additional hours to her workload. These thanks were echoed from all in attendance.

He also thanked Mr Monson for his continued attendance at meetings, keeping us informed and always ready to fight our corner.

Thanks to the new District Councillor Mr Frank Sharpe who has attended meetings regularly and put our opinions forward and we now feel we have a voice at Breckland.

Thanks from the village went to Mrs Pickard for keeping playing field clean & tidy, to Mrs Forsyth for being a representative at The Wayland Partnership, Mrs Lusher and her team for Speedwatch, Mr Collins for footpath warden, Mr Hinds for Neighbourhood Watch, Mr Fletcher for tree warden, Mrs Peckham for press reports and Mr Sayers for entering all info on website.

Lastly and most importantly, he thanked his fellow Councillors for their time and effort in many different projects to help make the village a better place to live. Looking forward he feels that Ashill has an excellent group of Councillors representing them and the village is in safe and reliable hands.

WAYLAND PARTNERSHIP REPORT

Mrs Forsyth reported that the Partnership continues to meet regularly every other month but less villages seem to be represented.

A draft 10 year plan has been compiled which is a working document for consultation. It hopes to give support to businesses, tourism, communities, jobs and skills, health and well-being and also support young people.

Training workshops and courses continue to be held and Art and Craft exhibitions in the Dragonfly Centre are well supported.

The Dementia Café meets in the Christian Community Centre and is also well supported.

REPORT ON HOMEWATCH SCHEME

Mr Hinds reported that the past year has been fairly quiet with only 8 postings on the notice board. Theft of diesel, heating oil have continued to be targets, email scams and distraction burglaries as well as thefts in the village and deer poaching in District have been reported. He has also experienced problems with obtaining information and has now signed up for extra information.

He has recently tried to obtain replacement Homewatch signs but this is proving difficult and may be redesigned before being issued. He informed that there is still money in Homewatch account and this would be a good way to use the balance.

REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Mr Sharpe reported that Breckland being in shared management with South Holland District Council has resulted in savings of several million pounds.

In September Breckland had agreed to an expression of interest in Devolution and following talks a joint bid was made with Suffolk but this was rejected and it was recommended that Cambridgeshire should be included but they have found this unacceptable and talks continue.

The Local Plan consultations resulted in over 1300 persons attending and led to 2600 comments from public and 119 new site options for consideration. Further consultation in Summer/Autumn. Once adopted it will identify a 5year supply of land for housing giving control over new housing developments.

Breckland had released funding for improving Broadband and the Budget had resulted in a small annual increase and planning is in place to ensure that there will be no reliance on Government funding and no dependence on Council's reserves by 2019/2020. He gave information re grants for Dementia sufferers and Disabled Facilities. Breckland Key Select

now operates to assist people seeking Social Housing and the move of DWP office to Elizabeth House was proving successful.

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

As Mr Monson was unable to attend, there was no County Council report.

ASHILL WELFARE CHARITY TRUSTEE'S REPORT

Mr Ketteringham as Chairman of Trustees presented his report by firstly explaining the situation with Bennett Homes over the boundary with The Green. The Land Registry plan is far too vague for Trustees to insist that Hedge, trees and ditch belong to the site so Bennett Homes has suggested joint ownership and the Trustees are awaiting a map from them to indicate which trees are to be their responsibility. In the meantime a branch hanging low on the Ash tree had to be removed with permission from the tree officer at Breckland Council as this has a Tree Preservation Order on it.

Also on the original plan for the site, it was agreed that there should be a footbridge to The Green sited half along the southern boundary but Bennett Homes took it for granted that the Trustees would maintain this which they are not happy about so it does look as though there will not be a footbridge and the walkway to Hale Road has also changed twice.

He went on to explain that the reeds in village pond are taking over and they had instructed a maintenance firm to kill them off last Autumn but this had failed to be done and once they start growing again, they will be attended to.

Complaints had been received regarding the Muscovy ducks and with ever increasing numbers it may be necessary to remove some of them.

The Common continues to be enjoyed by many and the Howell family has now taken over the cutting. However, the cutting of Deveil's Dyke has had to be postponed because of wet weather so will not be cut until Autumn.

Several Charitable grants have been made during the year but grants to individuals are kept confidential. Anyone or groups who feel they need assistance should contact Trustees.

Finally he expressed thanks to Mrs Peckham for keeping the area of village Green clean and tidy and to Ruth Seager as Clerk who does so much behind the scenes and keeps the Trustees very well organised.

THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE ASHILL WELFARE CHARITY TRUSTEES for year ending 31st March 2016 were then presented by Mrs Seager showing a balance of £18,627-36. There were no questions raised and these were adopted proposed by Mrs Hardy seconded by Mrs D Bolton.

THE ACCOUNTS FOR ASHILL PARISH COUNCIL for year ending 31st March 2016 were presented by the Clerk/Financial Officer Jean Sangster showing a balance of £288,831-85 noting that these accounts had not yet been audited. Again the question of saving on electricity was raised and it was thought that this had reduced. These Accounts were then adopted proposed by Mr T Hinds seconded by Mrs W Peckham.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, LOCAL PLAN AND SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

As explained earlier a great deal of consideration had gone into whether a Neighbourhood Plan should be created but as there has to be so many consultations and a large amount of time and money to achieve one, it was felt that the Parish should concentrate on assuring that the Local Plan covers all the necessary stipulations for the best way forward for the village.

A further consultation will be carried out in summer and if there are no objections the settlement boundary will be adopted and the 5 year plan for land supply will then have to be adhered to.

The question of the Settlement Boundary being extended was raised and only one person requested that they would like to see it changed.

Great concern was expressed regarding the excavation work on land next to Community Centre and the Chairman explained that the Parish Council had not received any plans for this but be assured that if any come in, they will be presented at a Parish Council meeting. The Chairman of the Community Centre was most concerned that if this site is developed then the Community Centre will suffer due to complaints re noise.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman informed the public that Bennett Homes has requested that the new site be called 'Bennett Way' but that the Council had objected strongly to this and had suggested several other names but Breckland Council were unable to accept these as already existing in the Thetford postal area. It was agreed that the name of Allotment Gardens be put forward.

Mrs Barnes felt that there should be no footbridge across to Green and Mrs Fulcher agreed with this. The question of maintenance of ditch was raised. It was explained that Bennett Homes are to include a Maintenance Contract for each owner to cover the cost of this. It was reported that the sewer had been blocked again in Dunnetts Close.

At this point Mr Ketteringham stated that during the last 2 years he has come to realise just how much work Mr Leighton puts in behind the scenes and proposed a vote of thanks from the Parish . All agreed.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Mr Leighton reported that this will take place on The Green on 21st April 2016 and the Beacon will be lit at 8.30pm. The area will be roped off and stalls are to be held with Choir singing and Piper to play when beacon lit. There has to be First Aid cover on site so he has asked St Johns to provide this at a cost of £82-00.

The next Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council is to be held on Tuesday 26th April 2016 in the Community Centre at 7.30pm

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 9.10pm.