

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

April 2015

The Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Ashill was held on Thursday 23rd April 2015 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 Ian Monson County Councillor, and 23 members of the public in attendance.
Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Darby & PCSO P Bailey.

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

MATTERS ARISING

HIGHWAYS – The work to the drainage system in Swaffham Road has been completed and problem now resolved.

The state of the Church Street footway was again raised but it was explained that this is being monitored and Highways assured that it will be dealt with in due course.

Mr Hinds reported potholes along Cressingham Road but it was felt that they are only ‘depressions’ in which case Highways will not do anything.

The Clerk was asked to inform Highways that the flooding problem on Church corner has NOT been dealt with as promised by Mr Groom.

PLAY EQUIPMENT – All equipment in good condition. Still trying to set up a working party to apply for grants for further equipment for older children and possibly a MUGA. Council has had very little response from advert but two offers from public were received tonight - Mr J Foster and Mrs K Hughes.

DEVELOPMENT GOOSE GREEN ALLOTMENT – Following the completion of sale, there had been several problems - the removal of the Oak trees had been very controversial and despite the Chairman doing all he could to prevent this, Breckland had not supported the Parish and the trees were allowed to be taken down.

Also when detailed plans were submitted by Bennetts several more issues were raised and many residents attended the Planning Committee meeting to put their views forward but still Breckland took very little notice and these were passed.

Since then the Parish Council have met with Mr Adam Bell and raised matters with him and things look a little more promising with assurance that the drainage WILL be dealt with and a foot-bridge put across to Green as originally proposed. There is still a query as to ownership of hedge between Green and site.

SPEEDWATCH SCHEME – Mrs Lusher reported that the scheme now has 10 volunteers who are all keen and enthusiastic.

Over last 12 months 172 drivers have been reported at 37mph or more with a further 170 driving at 35 & 36mph, This was in just 43 sessions.

The Enforcement Officer has also held several sessions and in the period October to January 103 drivers were caught and fined.

The Speed Watch Administrator for Norfolk Constabulary has amended the team to just Ashill as Necton cannot provide any volunteers and she has also agreed an additional site at top of Fairholme Close so that the speeding traffic can be recorded as they enter village.

Mrs Lusher ended her report with sincere thanks to all her volunteers.

A request for sessions to be held on some Saturdays and Sundays will be looked into. Also Mrs Blackman asked why no sessions were held at Watton end of village and Mrs Lusher explained that it had been difficult to record vehicles as they were

still in 40mph limit but it will be tried again shortly.

Mrs Foster reported that cars were speeding on The Oaks and could a 20mph limit be put on the estate along with outside School. To be looked into.

The village now have two VAS - one each end of village and these are having effect on speeding traffic. These were obtained by a donation from a Parishioner and a grant from Norfolk County Council.

CAR SCHEME - The Clerk reported that there had been less journeys this year with 529 covering a total of 13871 miles. The Scheme now has 26 volunteers but administration is still proving to be difficult with most drivers having to have Medical checks in February and next year there will be DBS checks to carry out again.

The Chairman said that this is a most important scheme and vital to many residents to get to hospital and Doctors and he thanked Mrs Warne for her time in arranging the journeys and the Clerk for carrying out the administration.

LITTER PICK - This was again carried out at beginning of March and had proved a most successful two days with 26 helpers this year. Not only was it a time for collecting rubbish but very friendly mornings of getting to know people. The Chairman expressed his thanks to all those who had participated.

COMMUNITY CENTRE - The Committee had continued with Mr Keith Collins as Chairman and the AGM was held on 16th April this year and he was re-elected.

He thanked the Parish Council for providing Solar Panels to help keep the cost of electricity down which means that the hire charges do not have to be increased.

He thanked the village for their continued support at events held at the Centre.

He went on to explain that the Committee are hoping to carry out alterations to the Upton Room to allow for St John's to use this as their building at the School is to be sold but he confirmed that this will not be solely for their use, it will still be possible to hire this out.

He said that the Committee were doing their best to obtain grants as the Hall was getting into a bad state of repair with the roof leaking, the alarm system in need of updating and lighting needs replacing.

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.

RECYCLING BANKS AT COMMUNITY CENTRE - Income to May 2014 was £906-62. Mr Hinds asked if there had been a drop in the recycling since the changes were introduced for glass to be put in black bins. As we have not had the figures through yet it is difficult to tell but it appears that banks have been well used. Mr Monson informed that there have been problems at the Plant with sorting and strongly suggested that people continue to use the Recycling Banks rather than the black bins.

REPORT FROM POLICE - As PCSO Bailey is on holiday there is no information from Police but Chairman that we have had a better attendance from them over the last year.

WEBSITE - Mr Sayers has now got this set up and is not just for Parish Council but all organisations in the village who wish their information to be displayed. Mrs Hardy requested that her telephone number be removed from the old website but we thought that this had been shut down but will be looked into.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr Leighton reported that this year had been very stressful with a number of problems.

Firstly the problem with the trees on the Goose Green site and the following planning application and secondly the damage to the Lych Gate at the Church.

He explained that the Council had never thought this could be knocked down so had not taken out Insurance cover so it had been an arduous task getting the money from the driver's Insurance. He thanked everyone for their donations which now total approx £4000-00 and this money will be kept in reserve for future upkeep of the Memorial.

Some good news is that a Parishioner had given a very generous donation to purchase a bus shelter which is now in place and the VAS. The remaining money is to be used for a further bus shelter for which a site is being sought.

The Chairman informed that he is standing at the Election in May and if elected he will only continue for the four year period and he understands that in 2019 the Clerk may well retire as well so there could be many changes then. He also informed that Paul Darby was not seeking election again for our Ward so we will have a new District Councillor and he expressed thanks to him although he had not attended many of our meetings. Thanks were expressed to Ian Monson who had attended nearly all our meetings and who had been a great support to our village.

Mr Leighton thanked the parishioners who had helped with working parties throughout the year and went on to express thanks to the Clerk Jean Sangster for her dedication to the Council, to fellow Councillors for their hard work and good attendance, to Mrs J Pickard for keeping the playing field so tidy, to Mrs Forsyth for representing the Council on the Wayland Partnership, to Mrs Lusher for her organising of the Speedwatch, to Mr Collins for looking after the footpaths, to Mr Wright for carrying out repairs to the play equipment and keeping a check on it, to Mr Fletcher, who had taken over as tree warden, to Mr Hinds for the Home Watch Scheme, to Mrs Wendy Peckham for the press reports and special thanks to Mr Ketteringham who had been a great support this year and given a different aspect to many problems.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Gray, Mr Corps and Mr Wright for all they have done for the Council as this will be their last Annual meeting as they are not seeking re-election.

WAYLAND PARTNERSHIP REPORT

Mrs Forsyth as representative of the Council presented her report stating that meetings of the Partnership have been held regularly during the year although not as well attended as in previous years.

Numerous training workshops and courses have been held

The Heritage Group continue their WW1 project and the exhibition will take place in November at the Sports Centre.

The Health Focus and Dementia Group have held training sessions for businesses and organisations to be aware of the needs of people with dementia with the Dementia Café opening on 3rd March in the Christian Community Centre

Exhibitions held in the Dragonfly Gallery including glasswork, ceramics, paintings and jewellery have been superb and very well supported.

REPORT ON HOMEWATCH SCHEME

Mr Hinds reported that the last year has been fairly quiet with only 9 postings on the notice board. Thefts of diesel, heating oil and catalytic converters have been the main targets and now that spring is here, there have been thefts of ride-on mowers and chainsaws. The Police Direct site keeps its weekly reports and recently is posting general information on reducing re-offending in Breckland. He felt that Ashill was lucky enough not to have any serious crimes reported and was a good place to live.

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REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

As Mr Darby was not in attendance there was no report on Breckland Council

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Mr Ian Monson reported that being a part of this Parish Council was very rewarding and that it was one of the best that he goes to.

The County Council had had grants from Government cut and therefore further cuts to services were having to be made. Several of the services had over-spent and the reserves were disappearing. This is not a good time for County Council.

However the County should see some improvements to the roads with more money becoming available and also for Schools to assist the ever increasing population in Norfolk. One piece of good news is that the proposed £2-00 charge for taking rubbish to the recycling centre has been dropped.

There is always more to do but he stressed he would do his best to solve individual problems and anyone could contact him.

The Chairman expressed thanks from the village.

ASHILL WELFARE CHARITY TRUSTEE'S REPORT

Mr Ketteringham as Chairman of the Trustees gave his report. He said this year he very disappointed that someone in the Parish had been expressing their views on Facebook regarding the village pond. They thought that the Parish Council was responsible for the work carried out is the removal of trees but it is in fact the Trustee's responsibility and he felt that perhaps if this person had taken the trouble to contact them, the reasons would have been explained. He felt that this is not a good way to sort out grievances and went on to explain that a survey had been carried out of the pond and it had been recommended that the trees be taken down and the reeds and shrubs allowed to grow around or fencing would have had to placed all the way round.

The Trustees are at the moment trying to clarify the ownership of the hedge on the boundary between The Green and Bennett's site as he feels it may fall upon Trustees to maintain this and the trees and he thought this was not reasonable.

He reported that the Charity had had an Audit carried out which showed that it is working well but there were concerns about the management of money. In this day and age it is not necessarily the elderly that are the needy and organisations may well benefit from help. He encouraged anyone to let the Charity know if they can be of help - all in strictest confidence. The Trustees are Mr Alan Ketteringham, Mr Richard Leighton (the two elected members), Mrs Margot Pickering, Mr Jack Sears who are appointed by the elected members and the Vicar, Revd Jane Atkins.

He then thanked Mrs Seager for all the hard work she does for the Trustees.

THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE ASHILL WELFARE CHARITY TRUSTEES for year ending 31st March 2015 were then presented by Mrs Seager showing a balance of £17,790-67. There were no questions raised and these were adopted proposed by Mrs Hardy seconded by Mr Leggett.

THE ACCOUNTS FOR ASHILL PARISH COUNCIL for year ending 31st March 2015 were presented by the Clerk/Financial Officer Jean Sangster showing a balance of £413,893-32 noting that these accounts had not yet been audited. The Clerk pointed out that no interest had yet been received from the Investment A/C's but the Chairman assured the public that sound advice had been sought re these. The question of 'had the new street lighting proved to be financially beneficial', was raised and it was thought that they had reduced the amount consumed but with all the increases in charges it was quite difficult to tell. These Accounts were then adopted proposed by Mrs M Helsby seconded by Mrs M Thomas.

DISCUSSION RE PROVISION OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Mr Leighton and Mr Ketteringham had recently attended a meeting at Watton arranged by the Wayland Partnership for the surrounding villages to discuss the way forward. Mr

Wassell, the Leader of Breckland Council had explained to them that the Local Plan is still to be consulted upon and he did feel that there was little point in producing a village plan until this was agreed as Breckland would have authority to over-rule this. Saham Toney are very concerned about the proposed development in Saham and in Watton and the effect this will have on the surrounding area. Much discussion followed and it was generally felt that once the Local plan is in place then we should get the framework in place for the village. Mr Leighton said there is a lot of work involved and he thought the only way to get views from Parishioners is to carry out a survey conducted by volunteers. Shipdham Parish Council have already drawn up guidelines and it was felt that we should contact them. There are substantial grants available to assist in getting Neighbourhood Plans drawn up so the Chairman asked if those people in attendance wished the Parish Council to pursue this further and all felt that they should. Mr J Foster and Mrs Kate Hughes left their contact details as volunteers.

ELECTIONS MAY 7th 2015

Mr Leighton asked the four new candidates standing for Election to introduce themselves. They are Mrs Marilyn Helsby, Mrs Margaret Thomas, Mr John Leggett and Mr Martin Blackman.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The next Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council is to be held on Tuesday 28th April 2015 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 9.05pm.